

"The Plot Sickens"—A Gay Short Story

The SMART SET

A Magazine
of
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This Month's
Complete Novelette

"Her Eyes Were Blue"

by

Caroline Stinson Burne

A Story of American Society Life

MARCH 1916



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THE SMART SET ✓

Edited by
GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

and
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CONTENTS

THE DEATH SENTENCE	Gordon Seagrove	155
THE CYNIC	James Shannon	156
HER EYES WERE BLUE (complete novelette)	Caroline Stinson Burne	157
HUH!	Myron Zobel	183
YELLOW	Bertha Bolling	184
RELATIVE VALUES	Oscar Lewis	185
FROM A "BABY'S BIOGRAPHY" BOOK	Ronald V. Cross	188
THE PLOT SICKENS	Howard P. Rockey	190
READJUSTMENT	Harry Kemp	195
THE HERO IN PINK	Orrick Johns	201
YOUTH AND A MONTH	Harold de Polo	203
THE MONOPOLIST	Louise Winter	207
LE CHEVALIER RIANT	Seumas Le Chat	212
HOLY MATRIMONY	Lilith Benda	213
BUSINESS OF DYING	Richard R. Newbold	226
THE WORLD'S COSTLIEST LUXURY (essay)	Patience Trask	227
SORROW NAKED	Byrne Marconnier	233
THE TORTURERS	Annette Wynne	234
THE BACHELOR AND THE BUBBLE	Hermann Hagedorn	235
AT NIGHT ALL CATS ARE GRAY (one-act play)	Robert Garland	247
THE CONCLUSIONS OF A WOMAN	Dorothy Taylor	259
UNREGENERATE	Charles Earl Gaymon	260
THE TWO-HOUR DAY	William C. De Mille	261
ONE WOMAN'S WAY	Kathryn S. Riggs	265
THE MEMORY THAT FAILED	Bertha Lowry Gwynne	266
CAFÉ LA JOIE	Frances Norville Chapman	267
THE TORCH	Mrs. Cheever Meredith	275
THEREFORE	Blanche Shoemaker Wagstaff	283
PANIC	Robert Welles Ritchie	284
SPOOF RIVER ANTHOLOGY	Gordon Seagrove	285
THE SACRED GARTER	Maurice Joy	287
LA DESTINÉE (in the French)	Florian-Parmentier	294
SEVEN PAGES OF CONSTRUCTIVE DRAMA- TIC CRITICISM	George Jean Nathan	297
THE GREAT AMERICAN ART	H. L. Mencken	304
IN THE SHOPS OF THE SMART SET		311

AND

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THE DEATH SENTENCE

By Gordon Seagrove

IN the little gray room they had tested the chair and the guards with whisky on their breaths had nodded their heads with fearful satisfaction. In another hour the shining electrodes would forever paralyze the body of Winburn Gray, who sat in a cell a hundred feet away living the terror of the last hour of life.

His act, at least so the journals had said, was of frightful cruelty, for he had strangled an aged man with one hand while he had ripped out his tongue with the other.

And he had done this because the older man had offered the woman Winburn Gray cherished and loved as he loved no other, an insult of fearful magnitude. Because Winburn Gray was of finer stock than most men who stand before the bar accused of murder the jurist had hoped only to give him a sentence of life imprisonment.

"But the inhuman cruelty of his act!" the papers kept insisting, with yellow clamor. And so Winburn Gray was sentenced to death.

In the death house he tried to keep

his thoughts from the woman he loved. If he could do that, the actual ordeal would not be so terrible. Busily, and with rigid tenacity of purpose he forced his mind to other things; columns of figures, interminable lines of poetry, whole pages of books.

Then came an interruption—a reporter, rat-eyed, black-haired, eager, merciless, came to get the condemned man's last words.

He was almost smiling, as he addressed the prisoner.

"I have just been to see her," he said enthusiastically. "She was in her garden. And now I have come to you. What are your last words to her?"

Winburn Gray's face seemed to crumble and his eyes grow dead, and his tall, spare figure crumpled like a wet paper bag.

Fifteen minutes later they electrocuted him.

But five minutes before that, they also electrocuted the reporter.

For the reporter had committed the greater cruelty.



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THE CYNIC

By James Shannon

ONCE upon a time there lived a man who possessed all the qualifications of a cynic: he read the Russian novelists, despised women, suffered from a bad liver, and had been born with a weary expression and a superior smile. His jaundiced eye looked out on a drab, uninteresting world. His tongue was bitter as near-beer. He spitted the hopes and ideals of sorry humanity and placed them under the microscope of his analytic mind. Testing them with the corrosive acid of his wit, he found nothing but ashes and wormwood.

He decried all romance and sentiment. He believed in calling things by their proper names. When his eye beheld a stout dowager in purple and fine linen, he would say to himself: "There goes 230 pounds of extra-fine lard and \$5 worth of paste diamonds." When he read of the proud pedigree of Cecilia Paschall-Smythe, the ten-million-dollar bride, he would observe caustically: "Sissie Smith, by Union Pacific out of

Amalgamated Copper." When he espied a boy walking arm in arm with a girl in the white moonlight, his mind would instinctively deduce the result: "One week of bliss equals one baby carriage plus one squalling brat equals one mortgage."

Now it came to pass that the cynic met a girl. She was ten years his senior, had hair like the kind you find in the butter, and wore red flannel underwear. There was no foolishness about her. The cynic took her out canoeing in the flood of a full moon. They talked Schopenhauer and Strindberg for an hour. Then the girl looked at him speculatively out of watery blue eyes and murmured: "I think you are the only man that has ever understood me." The canoe wobbled dangerously as the cynic gathered her into his arms and muttered in a voice hoarse with passion: "God! You're like wine, little woman!"

Moral: The bigger they are, the harder they fall.



IT is dangerous for a man to be too attentive to his wife in public. People will always say that he is trying to win her back.



TO have three addresses always gives one standing, especially with detectives.

HER EYES WERE BLUE

By Caroline Stinson Burne

FOR Anastasia, life began at the age of ten. Up to that time her memories, aside from the pleasant ones that concerned her father, were chiefly of having her hair curled, saying her prayers and being spanked. And these uninteresting performances were presided over by a North-of-Ireland woman named Maria Gillmore, who had superseded that easy-going Frenchwoman, Madeleine, of blessed memory. But when Anastasia was ten years old and going on eleven there came a day of poignant grief when her very soul seemed to slip its moorings and float off on the great human tide of sorrow.

Anastasia remembered always that morning when she had entered the little pink and gold salon of their house in the rue de la Tour Maubourg, a brief, quiet little street in the oldest part of Paris, where she had lived alone with her father ever since she had been quite small. She had caught sight of her father's body stretched out on the absurd Louis Quinze sofa—when he should have been at the breakfast table behind his accustomed newspaper. Amid the gilded rococo effect of the room there was something very incongruous about the long still figure and pale, regular features. And what was still more incongruous in that frivolous, elegant apartment, with its tone of exquisite artificiality, was the thin stream of bright red blood that she traced with her eye from her father's immaculate shirt front to a small pool on the polished floor.

Anastasia had never before seen a body from which the life has departed. But she knew at once, instinctively, that her father was—dead. There was that

familiar, yet unfamiliar look on the handsome features, that strange unrealness that she somehow recognized. The pale face was perfectly composed except for a slight ironical smile. For John Talbot Mansfield Devereux had drained his cup of bitterness with native grace! That mingling of nonchalance and mournfulness which the sons of Ireland carry with them as a heritage in their wanderings over the face of the earth was a part of his birthright.

"Dieu!" the child exclaimed with a small choking sound. Through an open window she caught a glimpse of the quiet sunshiny street, deserted except for an old woman who sold violets, and a member of the police force who was stationed directly in front of the house. She gave a pitiful cry and ran toward the motionless form that had been her much loved father. She stared at the closed lids with their slightly wearied look. She touched them with delicate finger tips, the eyebrows too, set at a supercilious slant, then the lean smooth cheek and firmly modelled chin. The meaning of the cold, unresponsive features came to her again more poignantly. She fell sobbing across his body.

How long Anastasia remained thus she did not know. The glass doors into the hall were open and she was conscious of the servants passing and re-passing, and whispering together. They said:

"Then she knows? Ah, the poor little one! But what is to become of her?" This last did not interest Anastasia. Her mind was numbed. As though in a dream she heard the faithful and formidable Maria Gillmore giving orders

to the other maids which were sure to be unintelligible to them. Then she heard her exclaim with dismay when she glanced through the doorway and discovered her charge weeping by the Louis Quinze sofa. Maria Gillmore next wondered frantically why the doctor had not remained, why—a great many other things that did not seem important to Anastasia. For after all, her father was lying there dead in the pink and gold salon. That was all.

Anastasia next heard Maria, as in a dream, intercepting Yvonne, the upstairs maid, who was endeavoring to carry off Anastasia's gold beads, her gauze fan, ermine tippet, scent bottle and lace handkerchief. For Yvonne evidently went on the principle that "When the ship is sinking, the rats must fly." She was about to do this and had taken the precaution to collect back wages as well.

"Take those things and put them back, you limmer. Dear, dear! Claudine was worth a ship's loadin' of the likes of you!" Then a reply from Yvonne in the most temperamental French. Anastasia heard dimly, and with a detached part of her mind took in the conversation waged by Maria and Yvonne. She would not have cared if Yvonne had walked off with the house and all the rococo furniture and brocaded hangings as well. What mattered gold beads and ermine neckpieces now? She would never again don beads or fur tippet to drive in a *voiture* by his side, to stop, have the carriage wait, and walk with him through the green twilight of the Bois. She would never ride with him in the early morning when the mist rose from the river as they crossed the Pont Alexandre. Never again would she wheedle Maria Gillmore to brush her hair straight back from her forehead, curl it and arrange it in a coiffure similar to that of Mlle. Rolland of the Comédie Française, preparatory to going with him to the Pré Catalan or Armenonville, where she would sit and order the *complet*, quite like a grown up person.

For he had always treated her as

though she had been years older—it was his whim to do so. And he had talked charmingly and told her stories of Inniscarra, his old home in that beautiful southern county. He had described fox hunting and the coursing at Dunraven. And he had told her of gay picnics and tennis parties in the rain, where everyone played keenly in spite of the weather. And those who had come to watch sat calmly in the drizzle, laying wagers, drinking tea, or something stronger, and partaking of gooseberries as big as peaches and whipped cream. He had told her of wild moonlight steeplechases over the rough Irish country. And then there was the funny story of the cow that got up in the bell tower of Kilchray Abbey, and the one about the hound that had no pedigree, was bought from a cottager, trained for coursing, and finally won the Irish Derby. Anastasia's eyes used to shine, and her dark cheeks had glowed, heightening the contrast between her black hair, warm olive skin, and the amazing blue of her eyes.

John Devereux had looked at his daughter with a glance full of careless pride:

"Ah, some day you'll be the famous sportswoman!" he would exclaim. "And, by George, a beauty too."

"O, darling Dad," she had begged, anxious perhaps for this consummation. "Let's go over to Ireland now."

But a shadow seemed to pass over his quick-smiling features when she suggested this.

"O, not just now. I couldn't manage it now. But some day we'll go," he had promised. "And you'll be received with the best of them." He always took considerable satisfaction in this last statement.

Although Anastasia had been allowed frocks, hats and trinkets far too elaborate for her years and given privileges denied to much older girls, she had always accepted things quite simply. When her father insisted that she be addressed as "Miss Devereux" and never "Miss Stasia" by her nurse, the child ae-

cepted it as her due, but thought nothing of it. The young count who was her father's most intimate friend once described Anastasia as "a Little Personage rather than a little person." To be sure, she had a few small vanities. She told her father that she could never by any possibility forget the supreme joy and importance of being measured by Worth for her first riding habit. And when she was pointed out at the Opera or at Rumpelmayer's as "the little daughter of the Captain Devereux, *qu'elle est belle, n'est ce pas?*", she rather enjoyed the experience.

But with it all, one could not have said that Anastasia was spoiled. She accepted responsibility too readily—not for herself, but for her father. Perhaps Anastasia divined that her father was not at all the sort of person who is markedly capable of "looking after himself."

At any rate, she set herself the task of doing this for him almost as soon as she could walk. If he went out in the evening, Anastasia would be sure to hear his hired *fiacre* returning in the small hours of the morning, and she would sit up in bed as he mounted the stairs. He would gingerly turn the knob of her door and enter quietly enough. But she would call out, "Well, Dad?" in an excited whisper. And he would answer, "Very well, indeed. And how's my girlieen and why isn't she asleep?" And she would laugh and jump up and embrace him delightedly. And he would jingle some coins in his pocket—or perhaps he wouldn't.

Other times, numbers of gentlemen would come to the house. They would play cards around a green table all night, and sip their drinks in an abstracted manner and say hardly anything. The next morning her father would sometimes be headache and worn looking. Often Anastasia would herself carry a tray up to his room. And always she saw to it that the tea was "drawn," that the eggs were right to the fraction of a second and that the toast was a delicate brown. She would watch him with a kind of solemn de-

light if he were in an elated mood, when he always ate everything on the tray without appearing to notice what it was. But if he ate nothing, but smoked innumerable cigarettes and talked in a light, chaffing tone as was his custom when downcast, she would sigh gently. And she noticed that their expenditures increased or decreased according as her father's breakfast moods varied. Truly Anastasia was an observing child and always drew her own conclusions.

But now something unaccountable and unforeseen had happened. Anastasia only knew that the world had suddenly become a howling wilderness. She could draw no conclusions. To be sure she could not help overhearing the gossip of the servants. They had mentioned something about a duel Monsieur had fought that morning at daybreak. It was said that a foreign gentleman had shot Monsieur through the lung. It was just a quarrel over the cards. It was very sad. The doctor had returned in the carriage with Monsieur, as well as some other gentlemen. But he had died of his wound immediately on arriving.

This was the only explanation the child had been given, although she had overheard Yvonne suggesting that "there was always a woman." But she had repudiated this at once. A queer sort of rage had taken possession of her at the words, although she had not understood the implication. But that her father could have risked his life for a woman of whom she knew nothing at all was unbelievable. It was unthinkable. And so she locked the horrid thought out of her mind forever.

And then the doctor returned with several very bourgeois looking persons, and Maria Gillmore gently led Anastasia away.

The following day, her father's attorney came. Anastasia received him, not in the pink and gold salon where her father's bier had been placed, but in a very prim, very stiff little room on the left as one entered the house in the rue de la Tour Maubourg. M. Bonheur endeavored to be kind, but was

evidently perplexed and embarrassed by the situation. He apologized profusely for intruding on her grief so soon. But it was necessary, as she could not remain there alone. And the family—M. Bonheur passed over the family as lightly as possible. It was indeed very regrettable, this sudden demise of her father. But the good God evidently knew best. And she must be brave. Anastasia nodded gravely. But there was no answering spark in her eyes. He next discoursed at some length on the subject of duels, giving a brief résumé of several at which he had acted as second, without apparently noticing that the subject was a painful one to the child.

Then he at last came to the reason for his visit, namely, acquainting Anastasia with some of the details of her future. He informed her that it had been her father's wish as expressed in his will that, in the event of his death, his daughter be placed under the guardianship of his oldest sister Diana, Mrs. Pinckney Dunwoodie, who had married a wealthy American and was living in the States.

Anastasia looked her dismay. She had expected to go to Ireland. But M. Bonheur did not know this and believed she was unhappy at the thought of leaving Paris.

"Ah, my poor child, you are to exchange our beautiful Paris for a desert island adjacent to the coast of America. Children do not, as a rule, mind these things. But you, mademoiselle, have sensibilities! The island is known simply as long island. I do not know a great deal about its orthography, but I understand there are a number of other estates there besides that of your uncle's. At all events, you will have several cousins as your playfellows and will grow to like it, I trust." M. Bonheur sighed with relief when Anastasia made no reply whatever. "Your aunt will be notified by cable of—the circumstances. If she accepts the guardianship, you must be ready to start at once for America, Mademoiselle. The good Maria will, of course,

accompany you. This will be agreeable, I hope?" M. Bonheur bowed deferentially and departed.

That night Anastasia found it impossible to sleep. She kept forming imaginary pictures of the "desert island" near the coast of America to which she was going. The memories of Paris and of countless places in or near the city where she had gone, always in the company of her father, crowded her brain. A great wave of homesickness and of longing for her father swept over her. Only another day and she would not have even that semblance of reality now lying in the pink and gold salon to cling to!

She slipped from her bed, threw a dressing gown over her night robe and went out into the hall. It was nearly midnight by the small gilt and glass clock on the mantel shelf as she left her room. She started down the stairs quietly so as not to be heard by Maria Gillmore, who had already retired for the night. Halfway down the staircase she stopped, arrested by the subdued murmur of voices in the room below.

There was no light in the apartment but the yellow glow of the candles that burned around the bier of her father—placed there, no doubt, by one of the French servants. But in the dim light, Anastasia distinguished the forms of two men and a small slender woman who had a heavy veil thrown back from her face. One of the men she recognized as a gentleman who had sometimes played cards with her father in the evening. But she could not have told what his name was. Anastasia never met the gentlemen who came to play cards, nor was she even visible to them. But the tall man of military bearing she had never seen before, nor did she know the woman, who was remarkably beautiful and looked at the tall man rather than at the dapper Parisian when she spoke. And he, in turn, treated her with marked deference.

A great many people had already come to view her father's body, some out of genuine respect and others out

of curiosity. For the duel had been of a sensational sort. Even Paris toward the end of the nineteenth century was not used to fatalities in its *affaires d'honneur*. And there had been much talk about this one and hints that there was much that the eye of the public could not see back of. And although it did not so much surprise Anastasia to see these people standing about her father's coffin in the candle light, their attitudes struck her as being, somehow, different from those of the others who had come. The woman in particular seemed to have a special interest that almost amounted to the *right* to be there.

Anastasia felt oddly drawn toward the beautiful woman who gazed down at her father's face, a look of intense pity and sorrow in her eloquent dark eyes. And her father's face still wore that slight, ironic smile. But it had also a more de-individualized look than it had ever worn in the mobility of life. John Devereux had always had that look of *race* that makes one realize that, after all, a man has very little to do with the making of his own face, as of the bedrock of character. His ancestors have done that for him generations ago. His are the fleeting moods and passions that change it and color it—then leave it as it was destined to be turned out by the family mold. Perhaps this accounted in part for the tragic wistfulness with which the woman's unsatisfied glance returned to the face of the dead man again and again. Anastasia noticed it and somehow she formed the idea that the woman was looking for something in her father's face that she did not find, and that because of this she was disappointed, unhappy. The beautiful woman looked at him across the length of the black shrouded casket, and it seemed to form a tangible barrier between them. Truly he had slipped away from her forever and had been gathered unto his fathers.

Anastasia had at first wondered if this dark, slender woman who had apparently loved her father, could be the

young sister Nora, of whom he had often told her. But the little scene made her realize that this was not a woman of her family, or even one of Irish birth. And when the lady spoke, it was to confirm the idea. Her voice was full and low pitched and she spoke in French.

"And to think, Michael Stefanovitch, that we might have prevented this had we come sooner," she said, and sighed deeply. At the words, the child, who had been curiously drawn to the unknown lady, was left cold. Why, then, if she could have prevented her father's death, as her words implied, did she *not* come sooner? Before, Anastasia had had the impulse to come down and make herself known to the lady. She had longed to question her and find out when and where she had known her father and what they had been to each other. But now her remark about "had we come sooner" did not excite Anastasia's curiosity as much as it repelled her. It seemed to her merely cruel that this woman might have prevented her father's death and had not done so. She judged quickly and simply as a child does.

And so the moment passed when Anastasia might have spoken to the beautiful woman—for good or evil. Once the child gave a little sob, and the woman looked up with her great somber dark eyes in which the light flashed when she spoke. But her glance did not reach the level of the small figure huddled on the stairs almost up to the landing.

A moment later, the woman drew her veil over her face, spoke a few words to the tall man at her side, took leave of the young Parisian, then, after bowing her head over the body of John Devereux, she walked through the entrance hall, out of the door and out of Anastasia's life. It was many years later when Anastasia saw her again.

CHAPTER II

MEADOWSWEET FARM might be considered a farm in much the same fash-

ion that the Petit Trianon was a dairy. It was in reality neither more nor less than Mrs. "Dickie" Ruxton's unostentatiously named country place at that exclusive little summer colony, Craggley Ardee. The house itself was delightfully low and rambly and appeared to be, but was not, delightfully old. It was set at the end of a thickly wooded promontory with a small inlet called The Weirs on one side and Put In Harbor, with its countless low, duck-haunted islands, on the other.

On an afternoon of early summer, a dark-haired girl was being rapidly whirled toward Mrs. Ruxton's picturesque and inaccessible "farm" in one of the high-powered Ruxton cars. The machine rolled swiftly over the bumpy country roads, and the girl bounced about the enormous tonneau with its foot-deep cushions. She did not appear to mind, however, and kept looking about her with delighted glances to right and left. She sniffed the keen salt air ecstatically and made ineffectual dabs at the cloud of black hair that kept escaping from under her trim hat brim, and at intervals lunged after her leather vanity box that continually slid down off the seat. Occasionally she addressed a gracious word to the chauffeur. He replied with the utmost respect but could not repress a slight smile at the flattering, almost personal interest she took in his answers to her questions.

"Not but what a body couldn't see in a jiffy that she was used to the best. It was just the young lady's way." Miles, the chauffeur, had the trained servant's shrewd judgment, and recognized the status of the young lady in question in spite of her over-enthusiastic manner and somewhat shabby attire. For at twenty, Anastasia Devereux still had that indefinable air that had distinguished her as a child, in spite of many vicissitudes. And indeed from the time she had first appeared at Chad's Neck, the Long Island home of her cousins, life had been a continual struggle to keep pace with that shifting panorama, her environment.

She had rapidly grown accustomed, however, to the rollicking family of cousins by day and the fog horns by night. She had succeeded in becoming used to Aunt Diana, who was fond of action and indulged in all forms, from running a carpet sweeper when the maids left, as they frequently did, to running races with her children, mounted on quadrupeds of varying species. Anastasia realized readily that it was the natural thing for one's uncle to shut himself in the library all day and write histories of the Merovingian kings, and at night to retire to a workshop at the top of the house and spend the evening "inventing things." She had come to accept most things unquestioningly!

Then there had been long, unprofitable years spent at boarding school, with short, riotous vacations at Spindrift interspersed. It was in one of these vacations that Pinckney Dunwoodie, the oldest cousin, fell in love with her. Stasia laughed him out of it, never realizing that she herself quite returned his young affection. She went back to school, mistaking her passion for a long over-due attack of homesickness or remorse at having smashed Pinckney's favorite brassey. Then one of her friends started a violent flirtation with the young curate at the church they attended daily during Lent, and Stasia suddenly, with a mingling of awe and embarrassment, identified her feelings.

But the most poignant emotion of Anastasia's life was still that mingling of tenderness and adoration she had preserved toward her father. And this was shadowed with compassion. For sometimes when she saw her face reflected in her mirror before she blew out the candle and slipped into her bed, Stasia recalled vividly that morning in the rue de la Tour Maubourg. Her dark hair, brushed straight back, grew the same way in that little widow's peak on her forehead. Her features were the same, pale with fatigue perhaps, instead of— No, Stasia could not forget her father!

Then all the careless, delightful Spindrift phase of life changed abrupt-

ly. Mr. Dunwoodie had always regarded the Merovingian kings and her husband's inventions with amused tolerance. She found that they were, instead, rather expensive luxuries. One invention, in particular, into the promoting of which Mr. Dunwoodie had put a great deal of money, failed. It was intensely surprising and unpleasant to discover one day that they were left with practically no income. Pinckney was by that time a junior lieutenant in the navy. Nora and Diana, the two oldest girls, were fortunately married. But something must obviously be done about Stasia, whose small fortune had all been lost when her uncle's invention failed. Of course, Stasia ought to marry. But that seemed difficult to arrange at a moment's notice. Stasia's coming out had been delayed because Nora, who was the same age, wanted to have a whole season first. This complicated matters. Mrs. Dunwoodie thought; then, being accustomed to act, she sat down and wrote to Mrs. "Dickie" Ruxton, her husband's sister, and exceedingly popular as a hostess. In her letter she explained the situation and offered to let Mrs. Ruxton stage manage Stasia's début.

Now Mrs. Ruxton remembered Stasia as a dark-skinned little hoyden, usually in disgrace during her short, infrequent stays at Spindrift. Besides, girls bored her. So she replied that she would be glad to have Stasia as a social secretary and would have her down at Craggsley Ardee the following summer. Then, if she found it advisable, she could bring her out later. In fact, girls sometimes came out down there, following the Newport custom. She enclosed a check for Stasia's tuition and expenses during a six months' course.

Aunt Diana decided that half a loaf was better than none. And so it came about that Stasia Devereux, in the capacity of secretary to Mrs. Ruxton, was rapidly approaching Meadowsweet Farm. Now the car rolled in through the gateway and up the shallow, winding curves of a drive that threaded its

way among tall tree trunks laced together by a thick undergrowth of laurels, scrub oaks, wild cherry and dogwood, until it stopped under the porte cochère.

A man in livery threw open the door when Anastasia had stepped out of the car and a moment later she entered a large, square hall with a staircase of carved oak and a Renaissance chimney place with a motto in mediaeval Italian above it. Mrs. Ruxton's maid found her in a small reception room opening on the hall and conducted her to her aunt's apartments.

Mrs. Ruxton was a somewhat plump lady in a creamy lace negligée that set off to advantage red gold hair that Stasia vaguely remembered as having been some less brilliant shade.

"How are you, my dear?" Mrs. Ruxton greeted her. "You look tired. Amélie will bring you some tea. Or would you prefer— But of course not. You're really quite pretty. Perhaps you won't do for a secretary after all."

Mrs. Ruxton used little dramatic exaggerations of speech and waved a pair of exquisite hands helplessly to illustrate her points. Meanwhile, Stasia sniffed her aunt's faint, ultra new and expensive perfume and glanced about the room with its pretty French furniture. She thought Mrs. Ruxton, reclining Recamier-wise on a chaise-longue for which she was a bit too heavy, resembled a pretty actress. Tea arrived shortly afterwards and Stasia was grateful for it. A long, hot journey and the strain of anticipation had worn down her usual buoyancy. But two cups of strong tea stimulated her amazingly. When Mrs. Ruxton next looked at her, the girl's eyes were shining and the color had come into her cheeks.

"Heavens! What a change a cup of tea makes in a woman. If I'd made it a cocktail you'd be a raving beauty by this time," she exclaimed delightedly. Then she frowned slightly. Stasia must not be made too prominent just yet. "Now run away and lie down be-

fore it's time to dress. You have a little white frock?"

"I think I have something that will do," said Stasia with elaborate carelessness. In reality she was thinking that it might be rather difficult to pose against Callot and Lavin in a cross bar muslin.

"I suppose I had better get you something. Still—as my secretary—"

Mrs. Ruxton looked at the girl with a swift, appraising glance.

"Thank you, Mrs. Ruxton, but—"

"Oh, don't be formal! You never called me Mrs. Ruxton," the lady laughed.

"Aunt Lulu," Stasia amended obediently.

"But not *that* dreadful name!" Mrs. Ruxton shuddered at the name as at something she had lived down.

"How would just 'Tante' do?" Stasia suggested helpfully.

"Delightful! And wasn't there a book called that, too? I never read it, but it sounds rather sweet, you know. Oh, and you won't mind—I'm so crowded this weekend—I've had the housekeeper make up your bed in the linen room. And I told Ardace Ransom you would use her bathroom. She's charming and won't mind; I entertained a great deal for her when she came out last winter." Mrs. Ruxton smiled and waved Stasia out of the apartment.

When Stasia reached her room she found her luggage piled up in most of the available floor space. She proceeded to rummage through the trunk that had been her uncle's during his college career and finally extricated a bath robe that had belonged to Pinckney in its palmy days. Arrayed in this she knocked on Miss Ransom's door.

"I'm so sorry to disturb you, Miss Ransom. I'm Anastasia Devereux—Mrs. Ruxton told you? And may I borrow your tub?"

"Of course you may, Miss Devereux."

Ardace Ransom smiled cordially and held out her hand. Another girl, tall and very blonde, contented herself

with a glance over her shoulder before she strolled languidly into an adjoining room.

"Come in and meet Miss Devereux, Edith," Miss Ransom called after her.

"Not 'till I put on my complexion," was the frank reply. Ardace Ransom glanced over at Stasia understandingly. She had brown eyes and straight brown hair and a thoroughbred look altogether. Stasia liked her at once.

"Do you think this ash rose deep enough for evening?" The blonde girl, who was Edith Arbuckle, turned to Ardace again, just as Stasia closed the bathroom door and started to run her tub.

"What a name! And what a bath robe!" Miss Arbuckle continued in a rising inflection.

"Perfect," said Miss Ransom.

"Which?"

"The ash rose," said her friend, soothingly.

Stasia appeared somewhat later, her hair curling distractingly and her face pink and polished.

"Have you managed to get rid of the Long Island Railroad dust, Miss Devereux?" Ardace asked. She was determined to be "nice" if Edith was going to act this way.

"Yes, indeed. There was lots of it, too. I came all the way from Chad's Neck. By way of Jamaica, you know."

"Oh, do you live at Chad's Neck?" Miss Arbuckle asked with the first intimation she had shown that Stasia existed for her.

"Yes. Have you friends there?"

"Not exactly." Miss Arbuckle raised her eyebrows. "Only a man I met at New Haven last year. He was frightfully good looking and sinfully rich, at the time. But I understand that his father lost everything and blew his brains out. They say son's going the pace as hard as he can and is about due to strike bottom. I suppose you know all about Dick Starlow. I know all that was in the papers and *Town Topics*, but you can probably tell me a lot more." Miss Arbuckle spoke in a flatteringly

confidential tone and her smile was quite personal and individual.

"I'm sorry, but I don't think I can," said Stasia coldly.

But her face had flamed a bright poppy pink. There was a moment's uncomfortable silence. Then Ardace asked Stasia if there was anything she could do for her.

"I shall send in my maid to get you into your gown," she offered.

But Stasia thanked her and declined the services of the severe-looking, middle-aged English woman.

When she had left the room, the other two girls looked at each other a moment before speaking.

"Well?" Miss Arbuckle lifted her eyebrows inquiringly.

"Do you think she's pretty?" Miss Ransom asked.

"Oh, of course," snapped the other girl. "Not really, you know. But she has rather expressive eyes. And her color comes and goes when she talks."

"And she doesn't even make up." Ardace glanced out of the corner of her eye at the older girl.

"Well, that isn't in her favor. No one ever gives you credit for it if you don't," was the terse reply.

That night Stasia went in to dinner with a good-looking man who seemed to be about thirty but whom she somehow knew was much older. Stasia looked up at him shyly and decided that he had a good profile and his rather romantic-looking blue eyes would have been remarkably fine if they had not been slightly blood shot. She was wondering what to say to him when he noticed a platinum wedding ring on the hand of a pretty woman across the table.

"Do you like that fashion, Miss Devereux?" he asked.

"No, but I think the ones with small diamonds all the way 'round are adorable," she told him in a burst of confidence.

"Oh, do you?" he asked disappointedly. "Now I like the old-fashioned gold ones. They're so nice and sentimental. You can have your initials in-

tertwined inside or some inscription such as—'Happy Days,' you know, or—"

"Nights of Gladness!" Stasia suggested in the words of a popular waltz song.

To her surprise, Mr. Blagden, her dinner partner, burst into sudden laughter and looked at her curiously, as though for the first time. The tall lean-looking man across the table must have overheard the manner in which she had capped Mr. Blagden's remark. He also appeared delighted, and threw back his head, showing all of his large teeth. Stasia thought that he looked like a horse when he did it, and hastily drank half of her wine.

"By Jove! And I thought you were just a little white-musliny thing."

"What right had you to think anything of the sort?" Stasia returned, and smiled charmingly.

"And what right have you to understand the use of double entendre? Tell me," he leaned nearer and his tone was half mocking and half confidential, "did you intend that remark or was it merely an ingenuous break?"

But Stasia only smiled enigmatically. "You'd lose interest at once if I told you," she said.

Harvey Blagden was one of those bachelors of uncertain age and fortunes who devote themselves season after season to the most recent of the débütantes. He could be illuminating but was never *too* illuminating. And now he regaled Stasia with historical anecdotes of almost everyone present. She found this interesting as he had a sense of humor in spite of the melancholy expression of his eyes which the débütantes always considered so interesting. They invariably thought that he had once had some romantic, disastrous affair. But in reality the big things of life had always missed him and he tried to conceal the fact beneath an ironical, nonchalant exterior.

The young man on her right was of a very different caliber, Stasia discovered. He knew a great deal about polo tactics and told her at intervals of the

various musical comedy beauties whom she reminded him of. Stasia was flattered and thought it remarkable that so many different people should look alike. Mr. Blagden had been exchanging repartée with Mrs. Ledoux, a beautiful woman who had come to New York some years ago from one of the Scandinavian countries, had a brief stage career and married Farwell Ledoux. Now he turned to Stasia and again tried to make her talk.

"But I thought I should talk to Mr. Wildmerding, too," she protested.

"By no means!" Blagden exclaimed in simulated alarm. "That would be distinctly bad form! Besides, I have a delightful story to tell you," he added, lowering his voice.

"Very well," she smiled at him doubtfully. "Only don't tell me any more sleeping-car stories!" Her reply was heard by several people who repeated it around the table, remarking that "Old Blaggy was educating the débutantes again, but that one of them seemed fractious."

Stasia became a momentary center of attention as she sat with her head held high, the blood throbbing in her cheek and an excited little laugh escaping from her at intervals as she tried to reply to a dozen different sallies. Mrs. Ruxton glanced at her from across the wide circle of the table and wondered how her "experiment" was going to work out. A little worried line had come between her carefully "shaped" eyebrows. What she had failed to notice was that Stasia had eaten next to nothing, but had tried the different wines each time the glasses were changed.

It was just at this juncture that Mrs. Peter Cravath and her party from Eagle's Beak came in, explaining the four empty chairs to the left of Edith Arbuckle.

"You'll have to forgive us for being so late," Mrs. Cravath began as soon as she came into the room, "for we discovered your orchestra stranded on the way and gave them a lift!"

"Oh, are we going to dance?" Sta-

sia turned a radiant face towards Blagden.

"I suppose so," he replied gloomily. "You probably think it awfully jolly to jump up and spin around with your mouth full of entrée. When I dine, I prefer to concentrate on the food, with an occasional resort to conversation."

But Stasia's attention had been occupied with the tall, fair-haired young man who had come in with Mrs. Cravath more than with Harvey Blagden's tirade against the custom of dancing at dinner.

"Who is he?" she asked quickly.

"That 'fair-skinned, golden-haired son of the morning' is Fritjhof Torreson. He's a sculptor and an amateur at all the other arts—including sculpture, some people would add. His father was the really noted Norwegian sculptor and was decorated by half the European rulers for his archaeological researches. That means he dug up torsos and kitchen utensils in the isles of Greece."

There was a light note of sarcasm in Blagden's voice. But Stasia did not detect it, or perhaps she did not care to heed it. She merely gazed at young Torreson with wistfully solemn eyes. His features might have been rugged in some far-off Viking ancestor. Now they possessed simply a delicate irregularity. The mouth and chin were oddly sensitive, the eyes were rather deep set and varied from light gray to dark blue as he talked. At first his manner had been curiously abstracted and detached. His replies to Edith Arbuckle's animated conversation were merely perfunctory. Edith seemed slightly at a loss. Then, like the strategist that she was, her point of view veered abruptly. She had hitherto posed as being unquenchably light-hearted and abysmally ignorant. She had concealed her cleverness under a flippant manner and a sort of artificial girlishness that goes with most men. Then she appeared to suddenly drop the mask. In a low voice full of dramatic intensity she said something that she had read in a magazine that morn-

ing. Torreson stopped playing with the forks and turned to her with a flash of interest in his now deeply blue eyes. Miss Arbuckle looked gratified.

Blagden had been watching them in open amusement. Stasia had also seen and understood—with a queer sinking of the heart she could not have explained. She felt a great sense of futility.

"Fritjhof is lovely to look at, isn't he, Miss Devereux? At least all the women admire him immensely," Blagden was saying in his harsh, ironical voice. "Mrs. Ledoux says that to kiss Fritjhof Torreson would be an æsthetic pleasure!"

Stasia would have liked to ask why Mrs. Ledoux had said this, but she felt it would be silly, and, besides, she was vaguely displeased with the tone Blagden had taken. And then the music started and her mood at once responded to the rhythmic joy of the waltz which the orchestra played. She could almost see the lovely pagan forms of nymphs and naiads, of dimpled baby fauns and fat, puffy old satyrs. And in the heart of a green forest, a tiny silver waterfall sang. But most of all the music made her wish to abandon herself to the moment and just dance. She looked at Blagden with an appeal in her eyes which he did not appear to notice. Then her glance encountered Fritjhof Torreson's. He was relieved of the necessity of asking Edith Arbuckle for this dance, as she had her dinner partner to rely on, although he had expected to claim it. Now, instead, he rose from the table and made his way around to Blagden's place.

"Blaggy, old boy, I know you don't dance and I know Miss Devereux does. Won't you present me?" Blagden did so, and a moment later Stasia and Fritjhof had danced themselves out of the dining room, across the verandah and out of view. Blagden watched them as one sometimes watches two butterflies flutter out across a sunshiny bit of open country. And he wondered.

Meanwhile Stasia and Fritjhof stood facing each other in the pergola that was an extension of the wide, terrace-like verandah.

"You're not exactly beautiful, but you're fascinating," Fritjhof was saying. And he looked at her with a kind of passionate scrutiny.

"Hadn't we better go back?" Stasia smiled up at him.

"But why?" he asked. "It's beautiful here!" There was a kind of dreamy intentness in his voice.

Stasia, too, felt keenly the beauty about her. They were at the very end of the pergola now in a tiny grotto paved with small round stones and overhung by a huge gnarled Judas tree that was covered with purple and mauve blossoms. Through its closely interlaced branches glimpses of The Weirs were had, a tracery of silver in the moonlight.

"Isn't it an exquisite little place? I'm doing a bit of statuary that Mrs. Ruxton's to place here," Fritjhof spoke in a low voice that did not interfere with the spell of the grotto.

"Is it very lovely?" Stasia asked.

"Yes," said Fritjhof simply. "Just a young girl's slim figure—that sort of athletic chastity—that slim, lithe innocence, you know. I really think I've caught the spirit of it, too. 'The Golden Hour' I call it."

"The Golden Hour—" Stasia echoed him. They looked at each other with a kind of tremulous wonder. For Stasia, the golden hour had struck. And Fritjhof, with the instinct of the artist, recognized in the girl who stood before him, white and slender, the perfect expression of The Golden Hour. He drew her toward him gently, and they kissed.

A moment later voices and laughter were heard on the verandah. Stasia looked at Torreson in alarm.

"Why, dinner must be over. Everyone's coming out!" she exclaimed.

"All the better. I hate interminable dinners."

"But we left before the salad! Tante won't like it, I know."

"Who's 'Tante'?" Fritjhof wanted to know.

"Mrs. Ruxton. She's not really my aunt, you know. She's my aunt's sister-in-law. But she asked me to call her that. I'm her secretary."

"Her secretary. Oh—of course," said Fritjhof rather blankly. He looked at Stasia with a puzzled, slightly annoyed expression. Then he smiled, a gay, mocking, half-sad smile, as though he knew all the sorrows in the world. So a wise Pierrot would have smiled. "Anyway, she can't take away that Golden Hour!" said Fritjhof in his low, whimsical voice. There was a hint of recklessness in the little laugh with which Stasia replied to him. But through her brain part of a trivial old nursery jingle kept repeating itself:

Lost, somewhere between sunrise and sunset,
A golden hour—

CHAPTER III

It was several days after Mrs. Ruxton's dinner dance and the first appearance of Stasia at Craggsley Ardee, and it was seven o'clock in the morning. Stasia was inclined to agree with Mr. Browning that all was right with the world as she ran lightly over the long, sloping lawn of Meadowsweet Farm down toward the little pier that extended into the water. She wore a short silk bathing frock cut like a three-year-old boy's suit (enlarged from the paper pattern) and a Turkish towel was draped gracefully about her shoulders. A light mist full of pearl and silver tones rose from the calm waters of Put-In Harbor. Stasia's pink toes went paddling over the short, dewy grass with a delicious sensation. It was great just to be alive! Of course several annoying things *had* happened since her arrival at Craggsley Ardee. But on this wonderful morning, with all the troublesome people still in bed, they seemed very far off indeed—almost as if they had never happened.

It had been rather bad, not going back to the dinner table that first night. But Fritjhof had helped to make her

peace with Tante. For it was the sort of thing he could do most gracefully. Mrs. Ruxton was rather easily flattered; and, besides, although not everyone could be said to care for Fritjhof Torreson, for those who came under his spell he had a distinct charm. Mrs. Ruxton was not so much given to analyzing people as to influencing them. She had a penchant for young men. And this particular young man was already a promising sculptor. Or at least he had had a number of commissions from people who were socially prominent, his father had been really a remarkable artist, so she understood, and his mother was one of the Massachusetts Vanes. Of course Stasia did not understand all of this and thought it "sweet of Tante not to make a row," and wondered "how Fritjhof had done it." But then, he was so clever!

Stasia had reached the end of the pier, where she stood poised a moment, then dived into the cool, clear water. It was a long, shallow dive and she "fetched" quite a way before coming to the surface. Then she struck out, one slender arm cutting the surface of the water rhythmically. The nearest island was something under a half mile away and Stasia decided to direct her course towards it.

It was some time later when she rose from the water, waded through the shallows and flung herself, breathing rather harder than usual and with her color somewhat deeper, on the sandy beach. The swim had been longer than she expected it to be and the water was colder. But it was delicious to lie in the yellow sand with the warm sun shining down out of a deep blue sky. Suddenly, she was startled by a queer scraping sound. She sat up and looked about her, but there was nothing to be seen. The island rose abruptly from the beach toward a low hill topped by cedar trees, locusts and sumach shrubs. Stasia got up and walked along the shore of the island, looking about her for the cause of the queer scraping sound. Suddenly she came unexpectedly face to face with it.

"Don't do that! You'll ruin it. Pick it up and carry it down to the water!" she cried out and ran toward a tall young man who was dragging a canoe ruthlessly over stones, shells and sand toward the water's edge.

"Why, where did you come from?" Torreson looked up with good-humored nonchalance in his voice. But he dropped the canoe and came toward her at once. And he smiled down at her with a mixture of gaiety and tenderness, even a touch of eagerness in his manner. Stasia forgot about his unscientific treatment of the canoe and only thought how particularly blue his eyes were looking this morning. They stood there asking each other questions which neither thought of answering. And then Torreson suddenly bethought himself of something.

"Oh, I say, Miss Devereux, do come along and I'll show you something I'm making. Want to see it?"

"Do I? Is it a statue?" she asked breathlessly.

"No—but you'll see." He took her hand and together they climbed the short, steep ascent to the top of the "hill" that occupied the center of the tiny island. And there, in the midst of a park-like open space with spire-like dwarf cedars grouped about it, was the frame work, the outline done in rough timbers, a mere sketch of a building.

"This is going to be my studio," Fritjhof announced grandly. He dashed about excitedly explaining the advantages of the location, the air, the view and beauties of its construction.

"I'm going to take two violet frames for north lights—and I shall make some furniture, just benches and things, and paint them. I think they should be orange and blue—" He sat down on the grass, took a piece of chalk from the pocket of his gray shirt and rapidly sketched an extraordinary-looking chair with pointed arches for legs and conventionalized flowers spotting its surfaces on a piece of board.

"How wonderful! Oh, I wish I could help you. Mayn't I tack on

shingles or hem curtains or something?"

"Of course!" said Fritjhof generously. And they planned the studio all over again.

Finally, it occurred to them that it might be nearing breakfast time, meaning their own, not that of the Ruxton or the Cravath households.

"Where's your canoe? You'll let me paddle you back to your pier?" Fritjhof asked.

"Yes, but I haven't a canoe. I swam over," Stasia told him casually.

"You must never do that again before breakfast!" Fritjhof spoke severely. She laughed.

"What do you know about it?" she asked.

"I studied anatomy in Munich," was the unexpected reply.

After that Stasia went every day to the island with Fritjhof. And the shack, as they had come to call it with a certain affection, grew, if not in grace, in a kind of fantastic, preposterous picturesqueness. And when it was finished Fritjhof gave a tea at which some of the socially elect of the little colony assisted and Stasia made coffee in a brass samovar loaned by Mrs. Ruxton and poured it into assorted cups acquired in the same way.

After the completion of the shack Stasia still continued to go out to the island studio. Fritjhof said that he had grown accustomed to having her there and the place did not seem "right" without her. He declared that he could work much better when Stasia sat there and went over calling lists, straightened the accounts of the various clubs and committees on which Mrs. Ruxton served, or wrote important business and social communications for the latter. And when they had finished "working" for the day (which usually happened rather early) they would run down the beach together like two children released from school, and put off in Fritjhof's sixteen-foot knockabout to explore The Weirs, Put-In Harbor and the open water beyond. Fritjhof sometimes pretended that they were

cruising in the South Seas and invented stories about tornadoes, strange sea monsters and pearl divers. He wrote verse as naturally as most boys whistle, and made several charming word-pictures of Stasia and her "run-away-to-sea blue eyes" as he termed them. That anything so commonplace as herself seated on the sand, drying her hair could inspire a "poem" appeared almost absurd to Stasia. And yet, long afterwards, she could recall the way her hair had felt against her face, the taste of the salt air and the sound of the lapping seas when she read his scribbled lines on her:

Silver feet and curv'd throat, wet hair's gleam,
Stretched on the salt sand, deep eyes a-dream,
She scans the waters, tossing waters,
Calling waters, untamed waters,
Mystery beyond.

They might seem sophomoric and incoherent in their appeal to anyone else, but to Stasia, who had known the island where they were penned and could close her eyes and see Fritjhof, looking like Baldur the Beautiful as he wrote them, smiling a little and frowning a little, they were an incantation. In most of the things Fritjhof wrote was that strong love of the sea which doubtless must have been in his blood. And this feeling Stasia could share and understand. She treasured especially the verses he wrote on the young Irish girl (one of the maids at the house) who had followed her sweetheart to the new world. With a flash of insight he had written:

I stood upon the yellow sand across from Arranmore,
And the waves they lapped about my feet
to wrest me from the shore,
Saying, Moira, then, come over, to the land
of thyme and clover!
O the cruel waves, the strong waves,
Of the restless, wracking Sea.

The remaining verses carried out the story of Moira's wanderings and disillusionments in the new land, all done in the true keening spirit of the Gael. Fritjhof Torreson had not studied the

Neo-Celts nor yet human nature in vain.

Perhaps Mrs. Ruxton never knew of the remarks passed and the stories that went about concerning Fritjhof Torreson's "affair with Mrs. Ruxton's secretary or poor relation or whatever she may be." It was true that Tante was very much occupied during most of the summer with the War Relief Fund. She was secretary of the whole organization (or rather, Stasia was), besides being chairman of the executive committee and something else on the hospital committee and the committee for entertaining foreign representatives. And then she spent a great deal of time in scouring the country in a fast car from which she made descents on Prominent People and collected what was known as the "sinews of war." She attended all sorts of conventions and sometimes addressed a meeting or so.

She also entertained frequently people who had returned from the battle front or people who were about to go there, or distinguished foreigners who had come over to America to seek additional aid for their war-ridden countries. And in doing all this, Tante not only helped the sufferers in Europe, but added immensely to her own social importance. And of this at least she was delightfully aware. For in spite of the fact that she was herself a Dunwoodie, she had at times had to writhe under the fact that the Ruxton money had been accumulated far too rapidly.

But if Mrs. Ruxton had not noticed the growing intimacy between Stasia and Fritjhof, Mrs. Ledoux was at least very much aware of it. Sometimes she watched Stasia with a curious tenderness and apprehension in her beautiful if heavy-lidded eyes. She seemed to be making up her mind whether or not to interfere in the romance. For that she did not approve of it was clear. And yet she was fond of Stasia (who admired her extravagantly) and she sometimes talked for an hour at a time to Fritjhof with apparent enjoyment.

But she said nothing to Stasia, just then, and if she ever mentioned the girl in her talks with Fritjhof it probably made no more impression on him than water on a duck's back. For although Fritjhof had the power of *seeing* himself in the picture as well as *being* in it, and therefore realized that he was engaged in a quite sensational flirtation, he had the happy faculty of persuading himself that he was "different" or that Stasia was "different," and therefore the circumstances must be different. And at any rate, whatever seemed "all right" to him, must be all right for him—if not for other less fortunate people.

The first time that Stasia had occasion to doubt Fritjhof's heroic qualities with which she had endowed him because she found him charming in other ways, was one night after a dance at the Country Club. Mrs. Ruxton had not put in an appearance, being wearied after a strenuous week's campaign for war funds, and Mrs. Chasilis was doing the chaperoning. But since that lady's idea of chaperoning seemed to consist chiefly of sitting with her elbows on one of the small round tables for two, in a corner of the terrace, and gazing into the handsome, tired eyes of Harvey Blagden, a whisper had gone round among the younger members of the party, quick to size up the situation.

"It's getting slow," Bobby Wildmerding whispered to Freddy Dudan-zig after the fifth dance. "Mrs. Chasilis is good for a full two hours with Blaggy. Let's get the girls and go for a spin. It's a shame to waste a night like this!" Freddy acquiesced in the plan, and a few moments later Ardace Ransom, Stasia and Muriel Sanders, a popular young actress who had been "taken up" by a number of hostesses, including Mrs. Ruxton, piled into the tonneau of Freddy's car. Bob, Freddy and Fritjhof followed them. Bobby and "Dude" occupied the two small chairs and Fritjhof preferred sitting on the door and looking at Stasia, to a seat with the chauffeur.

It was a marvelous night, the car did not have to be urged, and the long state road stretched straight ahead, white in the moonlight.

"Fly forward, O my heart!" They all sang snatches of songs and laughed at nothing and were thrilled at nothing.

Once the car swerved out of the way for another vehicle that shot suddenly out from a crossroad. Fritjhof was thrown against Stasia.

"Love me, dear?" he asked quickly, his eyes very earnest, his smile very whimsical.

She held tighter to his hand. Why did he ask her that if—but of course he cared! Stasia's heart sang. When he leaned near her again she whispered back, "Wouldn't it be wonderful to speed along this way with just someone you cared a lot about—and then—then pop off a cliff into oblivion!" He looked down into her excited, glowing face with the big, starry eyes, and a slightly troubled look came into his own.

"It's not good for little girls to think about such things," he said lightly.

Then, before they realized anything further, the car was turning in at the far-famed Banbury Cross Inn.

In the dining room the young people from Cragsley Ardee at once created a stir from the fact that they were the only guests in the room in evening dress. The headwaiter at once ushered them with great ceremony to a table in one of the little stalls that were ranged on three sides of the room. This disposal of the tables left the center of the room bare for dancing, and the third side of the apartment was taken up by a huge cobblestone fireplace and an old-fashioned square piano which a tough-looking young man was manipulating with astonishing vigor.

Cocktails were brought in and something in a chafing dish which no one ate because the music started up again and everyone left the table promptly. The tough young man had stopped his thunderous ragtime and drifted into a popular waltz, something about its being cotton-blossom time in Carolina.

But no one cared what the words were or what the music was as long as the tough young man played with sufficient emphasis and accent.

During the rest of the evening Bobby Wildmerding insisted on ordering "the same" a great deal too often. He did this, not because of any evil intentions against his friends, however. It was merely because he knew that Freddy Dudanzig was heir to a million miles or so of railroad. Therefore, if he, Bobby, did not buy the drinks, Dude would think they expected *him* to bear the burden of the evening. For Dude was always being stuck simply because of the million miles, etc. Bobby decided to block Dude's bored sense of *noblesse oblige*.

And so it came about that, somewhere along after midnight, Muriel Sanders had consented to do several "stunts" consisting of humorous songs and recitations, and Fritjhof had leaned across the table and quoted Yeats, Dowson, and various minor moderns, to the half-curious, half-amused amazement of the handful of people left in the neighboring stalls. But when he rose at the end of the rough board table and, with a kind of veiled piercingness in his light gray eyes, did the love scene from "If I Were King," there was a sudden queer hush throughout the room. People forgot to eat and the waiters forgot to sag against the wall. But he looked only at Stasia.

Fritjhof, with the instinct of the actor, had chosen something that harmonized with his setting. The not too well lighted dining room, with its low beamed ceiling, dark wainscoting and huge chimney place, might almost have been the old French Inn back in the reign of Louis XI. And the tall young man with the disordered light hair, now splendidly fervent, now with the elusive, oddly magnetic smile lighting his features, might have been Villon himself. As for the girl, her slender, vibrant figure unconsciously inclining toward him—"Her eyes are lit with lightnings, for her heart is not afraid!" In those moments something as naked

and as unmistakable as a sword unsheathed seemed to flash between them.

"Rags" Muller, formerly in vaudeville, was the young man who had supplied the ragtime at intervals during the evening. At present he was seated at a small table, drinking beer and regarding the "Ardee bunch" out of the corner of an eye.

"Wonder who the light-haired feller is?" he inquired of the German waiter. "The Titian-haired baby's Muriel Sanders all right, the other Janes must be in the front row. The fat boy's Freddy Dudanzig and that's his side partner, Wildmerding. But the gink who was tearing off the E. H. Sothern sob *must* be in the perfesh, and in the big time at that."

A moment later, when Torreson came over and asked "Rags" if he objected to loaning him the piano for a while, "Rags" nodded in gratified assent.

"Go to it," said the former vaudeville performer cordially.

Now when "Rags" Muller played the piano, his method was to begin by striking several discords and to fumble around as if he had forgotten everything he ever knew. Then he would start unexpectedly into a rattling fusillade of notes that sounded like the charge of the light brigade followed up by the entire German army with all its artillery in good working order. He gave the effect of having taken the piano apart and put it together again before he stopped. But when Fritjhof ran his fingers over the cheap keys, the soul of the battered piano sobbed with joy. He went down the chromatic scale with chords that scorched the soul or sent it shivering into the void, then poised on a clear melody that sang in the heart of the hearer.

"O, little moon of Albion, it's lonesome you'll be this night." The music, just an improvised accompaniment of chords, and Fritjhof's voice, rising and falling in a kind of chant that was distinct from singing, embodied all human longings, hopes and regrets.

Perhaps it was a kind of professional

jealousy on the part of "Rags" Muller that induced him to lounge over to the piano and try to start a conversation with Stasia. She was seated on a mission wood bench between the piano and the fireplace. And because she was entirely sunk in the mood of the music she paid scant attention to his muttered remarks, except to look up at him once in unaffected surprise. But Muller was the kind not easily rebuffed.

"Better stick around a while," he told her in a hoarse whisper, as he seated himself on the bench beside her. Then—"Staying down to-night?"

"Why, no." The girl looked puzzled. She wished Fritjhof would say something to this officious person. But he apparently did not see. All at once, with a sneer on his coarsely good-looking features, "Rags" Muller leaned over, placed his hand on her bare shoulder and said something close to her ear. Stasia sprang up, suddenly very white, her eyes blazing.

"Fritjhof—I—I think I want to go home." She walked over to him and spoke in low, hurried tones. She was fearful of—she knew not what. She tugged at his elbow childishly.

"What is it, dear?" The music ended in a crashing discord.

"Go on—go on with the spiel. Keep the musix box. I'll take care of the baby doll prima donna. Call it a swap. Just for the evenin'." Rags Muller laughed insolently.

Fritjhof flushed as though he had been slapped across the face.

"How dare you?" he demanded. But his voice did not ring out. Muller laughed again—it was a kind of amused chuckle—and Fritjhof turned and walked away.

Stasia had a sudden feeling of anticlimax. She felt positive embarrassment for Fritjhof. Why had he not *hit* the creature? Why had he not sent him sprawling! It was not that she particularly wanted Muller to be harmed. It was not a desire for vengeance, it was a desire to see Fritjhof exerting his God-given strength against an enemy. She wanted to see Fritjhof

conquering, triumphant over that enemy. Of course no one liked scenes. But her soul, which had been walking on the heights, went crying in the wilderness.

"Let's get out of here," said Fritjhof as they joined the others. There was a strained, tired look about his face. All the glamour had fled from the evening.

"Did he say anything n-nasty?" Bobby Wildmerding wanted to know. "If he did, I'll go over and bust his d— piano and his d— ugly face."

"Come on, Bob," said Miss Sanders soothingly. She laid a small hand on his arm, and her bright, reddish hair was almost under his chin. They went out, silent for the most part.

"Here's to booze!" was Bobby Wildmerding's, parting toast. And he cast a baleful glance over his shoulder at "Rags" Muller. Miss Sanders laughed; a pleasant, tinkly laugh.

CHAPTER IV

THE following day was Sunday. Ardace Ransom and Miss Sanders had trays sent up to their rooms. But Stasia went for a dip in the salt water, thinking to dispel a persistent little headache, the result of a more or less sleepless night. After which she dressed and went down to the dining room. There she was hailed with delight by Harvey Blagden. (Mrs. Chassilis had not come down, then.) He brought her a melon and some toast and coffee, then selected an enormous breakfast for himself, carried it over to the table and sat down by her. He claimed to have a number of "new ones" and insisted on relating them to Stasia during the better part of the meal. She sipped her coffee gravely and smiled dutifully at the conclusion of each tale until told that she was a cunning thing and invited to go round the links. But Stasia pleaded "quite a lot of things to do" and escaped to her own room.

She was engaged in crocheting a runner in a silk stocking when there was a knock at the door and a moment later

Mrs. Ledoux entered. Stasia was intensely surprised to have a visit from her, particularly at this hour. For Mrs. Ledoux was a late riser. She began by discussing the out-of-door fête which Mrs. Ruxton was planning to give in a few weeks for her favorite War Relief Fund. Stasia naturally knew considerable about the arrangements that had been made for exhibition dances, pantomimes and playlets in the open air theater at Meadowsweet. But she could not help wondering why Mrs. Ledoux should get up an hour earlier to come and discuss them with *her* in the privacy of her room.

Suddenly she realized that the conversation was all of Fritjhof Torreson. First it had been the costumes Fritjhof had designed for the Greek dance, then the little skit he had written to be acted in the "costumes of to-morrow." The costumes were, of course, futurist, and the little comedy itself, he called a monologue, although it had three characters, "Because," Stasia laughingly explained, "he says the two girls both talk at once, and of course the poor man doesn't say a word!"

Mrs. Ledoux listened to Stasia's enthusiastic descriptions of Fritjhof's activities in behalf of the fête with a curious little smile.

"And who is to take the part of the Beautiful Maiden in the Phantasie?" Mrs. Ledoux asked.

"Oh, Edith Arbuckle. She's coming back especially for it. She ought to be lovely in it. She's so tall and graceful, you know."

"And Fritjhof is to be the Youth and play opposite her," her visitor asked, or rather stated it as a natural inference.

"Yes," said Stasia, vaguely puzzled and ill at ease.

Mrs. Ledoux rose to go and stifled a little yawn. "Edith is, of course, the logical person for Fritjhof, when he marries. She knows it perfectly, and is only waiting to have it dawn on him. As it will, in all probability. That is, if it hasn't already!" She laughed archly.

"But why do you think Edith and Fritjhof so well suited? They're not the least bit alike!" Stasia was surprised into saying.

"Ah, that's just it. Each has what the other must have. Fritjhof's mother was a Vane, you know. They have been prominent for generations. Cyrus Vane was ambassador when she met Torreson. Fritjhof is related to half the old families in New England. And Edith is an exceedingly clever girl and has half a dozen millions lying around loose! Of course it's quite obvious that it would be a natural enough thing," Mrs. Ledoux summed up.

"Yes, if they cared!" Stasia spoke impulsively, and her quick smile seemed to challenge Mrs. Ledoux.

"My dear Miss Devereux, Fritjhof Torreson is thoroughly selfish! I know it. I know him and I knew his father—rather well. He has talent, of course. But no more than many other people. And one *has* to have commissions. And from the right people, or there's no distinction in it, let alone the financial side of it. Fritjhof must have both money and position to succeed at all."

"But why be so hard on Fritjhof! I thought you liked him, Mrs. Ledoux," Stasia burst out in rather a reproachful, disappointed tone. Mrs. Ledoux was one of the people who had always been particularly friendly.

"Of course Fritjhof is charming. One would find it hard not to like him. But he has had so many affairs! It is impossible to take him very seriously. But you probably know them all by this time. Has he read you Lytton's 'Night in Italy' and told you what it *means* to him? And has he told you of the vicar's daughter he almost ran away with when he was at Oxford? That was the year that we heard he intended to go into the Church. What a rector he would have made for a Fifth Avenue Church! Well, I must be running along. I shall have to rush to get dressed for luncheon."

Mrs. Ledoux trailed out of the room in her graceful negligee, and Stasia was left feeling rather angry, she hard-

ly knew at what. But she was glad that she had "stood up for Fritjhof" when Mrs. Ledoux had said such horrid things about him. What was it she had said? Nothing very much really, except that he was selfish—the rest had been mere bits of gossip. Perhaps Fritjhof was rather "thoughtless." Suddenly she thought of the night before. The scene at Banbury Cross Inn rose before her again. She could see "Rags" Muller with his swaggering air and conceited, common good looks. She could see Fritjhof.

"Oh, if she hadn't come in just this morning!—*why* did she have to come this morning?" Stasia sat down at the open window and let the salt air blow on her hot cheeks. She closed her eyes and saw Fritjhof again. She could see his sensitive face, half in the shadow, as he had sat at the old square piano. She could see his fingers touching the battered keys. His hands were rather large and expressive, as though Rodin had modelled them.

Yes, Fritjhof was an artist to his fingertips! Anyone could see that. Any sort of social intriguing was farthest from his thoughts. He was too spontaneous, too pagan a creature to put undue emphasis on the boundaries of sets and the incomes of heiresses. If he had not measured up to what the situation seemed to demand of him last night, it was because his innate æsthetic sense had recoiled from the crudity of it. Perhaps it was better to ignore an impossible situation than to try to resolve it. Stasia had always been told that she was too impulsive because she was apt to do what seemed fitting at the moment, regardless of consequences. And this was referred to as "poor judgment." Doubtless Fritjhof had shown "good judgment." It would have been most undesirable to have had what the papers would have termed a tavern brawl, perhaps an arrest for assault—everybody's name in the papers—no chaperone—two o'clock in the morning! How fortunate that Fritjhof had shown such rare "good judgment"! Evidently Mrs. Ledoux did

not understand Fritjhof! Stasia sprang up indignantly from the window seat and started to brush her hair with quite unusual vigor.

During the two weeks that followed, no one at Meadowsweet did much of anything but rehearse for the War Relief *fête*. Karif, of the Imperial Russian Ballet, was installed at the house and carried on classes all morning and at odd times during the entire day. There were a number of people from neighboring estates and cottages who were to be featured in the exhibition dances. They came over for the special practise sessions every day and often stayed on for luncheon. The house was full to overflowing and Stasia moved back to the linen room again. There was an extra air of excitement prevailing.

Stasia and Fritjhof had resumed their attitude of camaraderie after the almost imperceptible break of which both had been subtly aware without acknowledging it.

Fritjhof stopped working on the almost completed "Golden Hour" and the half-finished portrait bust of Twombly Cravath, the eight-year-old son of his hostess. The island studio was deserted for a shop where theatrical supplies were manufactured. Fritjhof painted neo-archaic scenery, made tiny models of stage sets and sketched costumes for the various stars and their companies. Meanwhile Stasia boiled dyes and experimented with them on unbleached muslin for the chorus costumes, or cut curious beasts, birds and flowers out of one material and appliquéd them on a different material.

The outdoor theater at Meadowsweet was one of the most beautiful among the private theaters of its kind. A natural amphitheater had been utilized in its construction, terraces having been formed along its sloping sides on which the seats were ranged. The terraces had been built up like huge steps, covered with sod along the flat surface, and provided with a facing of rough stones. In the crevices of the stonework nearly a thousand varieties of

flowering plants bloomed. A triangular piece of Put-In Harbor could be glimpsed through a break in the hills that formed the amphitheater. A tiny stream came tumbling down over a rocky ledge, looking like a *tour de force* in scenic effects, and had been dammed up so that a pool was formed. From the lily-rimmed pool emerged a grassy island planted with dwarf trees. This was the stage!

It was across the quiet waters of the pool that separated the stage from the audience that Edith Arbuckle was conducted in a golden gondola; gracefully imperious, gowned in brocade and jewels in the Venetian Phantasy. After this representation of mediæval romance, Fritjhof's ultra-modern satire on dances and costumes of the future was performed in a light comedy manner. Mrs. Ledoux, in an Eastern dance with seven trained macaws, was applauded through several encores. The tale of Orpheus and Eurydice—with a decidedly modern interpretation—formed the basis of a clever playlet.

A number of characteristic and interpretative dances and a spectacular masque followed. Then, a huge terracotta vase appeared in the center of the stage. Two marble-like figures that formed the handles came to life and danced in a slow rhythm about it. Smoke then issued from the mouth of the vase, followed by Stasia clad in a unique costume which Fritjhof had designed largely out of points of green chiffon and neptune satin. While she is dancing, Fritjhof comes through the "wood" whistling to his superb Russian wolfhounds. He is wearing a hunting suit of leopard skin, has a bow and a quiverful of primitive looking arrows, and has evidently been following the chase. But he promptly ceases to do so and follows the fleeing nymph instead. A spirited dance pantomime follows. The nymph locks herself in the trunk of a tree, and the hunter beats frantically on the door in vain. But when he has flung himself on the ground despairingly, one of the hounds goes up to the tree and scratches at the

door. The nymph emerges, the hunter springs up and the pursuit starts again. The nymph even goes so far as to fling herself into the water (making a perfect swan dive from a height of about twelve feet). But again she is returned. A huge sea monster (containing an electric dynamo) is evidently on friendly terms with the hunter, and insists on bringing her in to shore on his back. When she again tries to escape, the hunter draws his bow and lets fly an arrow. She falls wounded, and he registers extravagant signs of grief. Then he lifts her tenderly, carries her from the stage, and out of view of the audience.

"You know you couldn't walk any way with those wet, flummy things hanging about you," said Fritjhof, as he continued to carry the nymph further than was necessary.

"I think I could if I wrung them out. Let me down and I'll try," said Stasia practically.

"Heaven forbid! Why, you look just like one of the Bacchantes from the Borghese vase. You mustn't wring anything out! I wish I could model you like that. Although I don't know," he added consideringly, "but what I'd prefer to do you undraped."

"Fritjhof—don't be absurd!" the outraged nymph exclaimed. "If you really want to do something useful, get me a wrap. That was spring water and I'm fr-freezing."

Torreson snatched off the leopard skin that had draped his shoulders and rolled it about the nymph, pinning her arms down securely. Then he continued triumphantly toward the house. When they were half way there he set her down for a moment. "You're not a bacchante then. You're a wee lamb in a world of wool!" he exclaimed, and deliberately kissed her.

"How mean of you," she sighed, "when I can't get my arms out."

"What would you do with your arms?" he demanded.

"Put them 'round your neck," she said simply.

"You darling!"

A moment later they were at the side door marked "tradesmen's entrance." Stasia had intended to go up the back stairs and avoid meeting any of the guests in her wet garments.

"You'll just come down for a minute to say good-night?" Fritjhof asked. Some of the motors were already in the drive lining up for departure. Stasia looked doubtful. The program had been long, the waits had been long, and it was considerably past midnight.

"*Please*, charming, modest, black-haired Sappho!" he begged, smiling down at her. Then suddenly he drew her to him roughly.

"Stasia—I've got to see you again to-night—haven't seen you all day—for a good many days, really. And then that pantomime thing—Stasia—you'll come—dear?" She nodded. She almost stumbled away from him. He had spoken rapidly and only a second of time had elapsed, but she felt faint and giddy, nevertheless, curiously elated.

"In the grotto—by the judas tree!" Fritjhof called after her in a low tone.

It was only a short time until Stasia came down the path that ran beneath the pergola leading to the grotto. She was slim and white, pale and shining, like a slip of a new moon. Fritjhof held out his arms to her; she sank into his embrace as softly as a cloud.

And they both were made aware of loving,
Past the dint of reason to unravel
Or the much desiring heart to follow.

By and by tiny wreaths of mist rose from the river and were blown into the grotto. The girl shivered slightly. She raised her head and looked at Torreson.

"I must go," she said softly.

Somehow it occurred to him that he would never see just that look on her face again. They walked toward the house together. He said:

"Good-bye, my little—little Golden Hour, snatched from a thousand leaden gray ones—good-bye, Stasia."

And she left him.

Stasia stood outside one of the French windows that opened into the

trophy room, and a sudden fear took hold of her. The house doors had been locked for the night and she had come out through a window left open in the trophy room. Although she remembered propping a chair against it, the wind must have blown it to, and the snap lock had caught and held. Stasia threw her weight against it and shook the frame; but it was locked. In nervous haste she tried the door of the main entrance and all of the other doors and windows, one after the other. The house was locked and barred!

She ran down the path that led in the direction of Eagle's Beak, the Cravath house. But Fritjhof was nowhere in sight. He must have reached the other house then. Stasia returned to the French window again. With a small stone from the gravel drive she succeeded in breaking one of the diamond-shaped panes of glass nearest the lock. She reached in, quickly unlocked the window, and a moment later was in the trophy room. But as the window swung open the electric lights were switched on. They flashed on polished silver cups, cases full of colored ribbons and pictures of horses and dogs that had won honors for Meadowsweet. And they threw into sharp relief the slim figure of the girl. Piercing electric bells sizzed sharply in every room in the house, and lightly clad guests and frightened servants seemed to spring up from nowhere. The burglar alarm had been turned on automatically! Stasia's heart was pounding suffocatingly. But she succeeded in looking as calm and aloof as one of the pictured thoroughbreds on the wall.

"I'm sorry to disturb you," was all she said.

CHAPTER V

THE next morning, "at a good hour," Amélie knocked on Stasia's door and asked if mademoiselle would be good enough to go almost immediately to her aunt's room. Stasia found Mrs. Ruxton breakfasting in bed. Her manner was neither kind nor unkind. It

might almost have been called business-like.

"Well, Stasia, this *is* a scrape you've got yourself into. I suppose Diana will never forgive *me*. Who was the man?" She put the question unexpectedly between sips of coffee.

"Why should you think there was anyone else?" Stasia parried without looking at Mrs. Ruxton.

"I don't suppose you stayed out in the grotto all night to see the sun rise! And I don't have to be told there was a man. But I overheard Edith telling the Dudanzig boy that she had seen you from her window just before she went to bed, down by the judas tree with some man or other."

"Edith!" Stasia exclaimed bitterly. Now she understood.

"O, Stasia—do you think that was a nice thing to do? Do you think it was kind to *me*?"

"No," said Stasia miserably.

"It was so—so *gauche*!" Mrs. Ruxton dabbed at the corner of one eye. "I suppose it was Fritjhof," she went on. "Are you engaged?"

"No. We never thought of that," said Stasia.

"Good Heavens! What sort of girl *are* you? Not engaged!" Mrs. Ruxton was torn between anger and amazement. "My brother's niece—my *secretary*, mixed up in an ordinary scandal! You must announce your engagement at once. You're in love with each other?"

"Yes," said Stasia in a barely audible tone. Mrs. Ruxton brightened.

"Perhaps it won't be so bad. You're so awfully impulsive, Stasia."

Stasia left her aunt's room feeling that the beautiful fairy story that she and Fritjhof had been living in had been told to some stodgy, unappreciative children and received with cold contempt.

It was later that day that Fritjhof came over from the Cravaths'. He and Stasia had arranged for a tennis match, and so he was in white tennis clothes and swung his racquet cheerfully. Stasia crossed the lawn to meet him.

Then, when they were down by the courts, she said unexpectedly:

"Fritjhof—there's something I ought to tell you." And she told him everything in a rush—all about the night before and of her interview with her aunt that morning, some of it.

"Good Lord!" Fritjhof exclaimed in a startled way when she had finished. He said nothing more for several minutes. Then:

"But what are we going to do!" he exclaimed.

Stasia looked at her comrade of the island in the "South Seas" with unembarrassed directness.

"Tante says we ought to announce our engagement," she said simply.

"The deuce she does!" he ejaculated.

"O, come, isn't there some other way?" Stasia looked at him silently.

"You know we don't love each other—*really*," Fritjhof explained.

"Don't we?" Stasia asked faintly. "But you've often said—"

"I know. But then you understood—"

They both looked straight ahead. They were sitting on the turf-covered bank at the side of the court which had been made when the ground was leveled for building the courts. Fritjhof hammered the end of his racquet into the sod and pulled off blades of grass. Stasia did nothing. The butterfly romance, delicately beautiful as the tracery of frost on a window pane, was dying before her eyes. It was like a humoresque suddenly ending with the despairing chords of "Götterdämmerung." And still she waited for the fantastic Prince to snatch her from the ruins of it. Then all would be well again. Their airy loves would suddenly crystallize into that something—exquisite, perfect. She was like Nora, sitting in her doll's house, waiting, waiting for the miracle to happen.

"Do you know, Stasia, that it would ruin my career to marry you? I ought to have a wife who can—help me," Fritjhof said.

"I could have helped you," said Stasia in a low tone.

"You don't understand exactly what I mean," he frowned slightly.

"You know, Stasia, I want to do what is best for *you*," he added. And the amusing thing is that he really believed himself.

That evening before dinner Mrs. Ruxton found occasion to drift casually through the library and say to Fritjhof, who had come over with the Cravaths and Mrs. Chassilis' party, something about the *début* she had been planning for Stasia. She went on to remark on what a pity it was to have anything horrid and unpleasant happen to spoil the child's little coming-out party! But she was sure that an announcement of the engagement—if only a temporary engagement—would "stop the gossips from talking." "And of course you can imagine how *I* feel," she had added. There was no time for Torreson to reply, but he looked at Mrs. Ruxton in a troubled manner and said he wanted to think things out.

Afterwards someone started the victrola in the living room and Mrs. Ruxton watched her guests tangoing with an anxious eye. She wished fervently that the whole annoying affair concerning Stasia was settled. People really couldn't help talking when a girl goes off after a *fête dansant*, stays out all night, breaks in a window and rouses the entire house at four o'clock! Stasia Devereux was a most trying sort of girl, and young Torreson just the sort of person whom it was impossible to count on.

Stasia remembered afterwards that the chimes on the stair landing had rung out for ten o'clock. Fritjhof had danced with her only once, and then an odd constraint and formality lay between them. They had been over polite to each other. Fritjhof was standing alone in the middle of the room. Everyone crowded nearer, thinking that he was about to recite.

He smiled a trifle nervously and held up his hand as though for silence. But Harvey Blagden had not noticed, for he was telling Stasia an "amusing" story about a chorus girl who was hard

up. And so Stasia did not hear the first part of Fritjhof's impromptu speech.

"Beg to announce—" were the first words she caught, with a curious premonition, "that Miss Edith Arbuckle has promised to become my wife—" Stasia did not hear any more. At first there was a slight hush at the close of Fritjhof's announcement. Then everyone applauded feverishly and said whatever came into their heads first.

"Then it wasn't Fritjhof that Stasia—" A girl's high, excited voice suddenly snapped off in the middle of her sentence, floated across the room. Then someone put a new fox trot record on the victrola.

"Come on, let's get out of here. Out in the air, you know. Never did care about this confounded jiggling."

It was Blagden who led Stasia from the crowded room out to the cool of the verandah. A few minutes later he was stumbling through a proposal. It happened to be his first! And when he had finished he looked at Stasia and knew that she had not heard any of it.

"Stasia," he said in a strained voice, "I've been crazy about you from the first. Couldn't you care enough to marry me?"

But she turned away quickly when he bent over her, and he stopped.

"We could be engaged for a year—as long as you like," he went on desperately. "If we announced it now, everything would be all right for you. You know how people talk—No one knows who it was, in the garden. They'd think I was the chap, Stasia—won't you give me the right to take care of you?"

Stasia had a sudden temptation to say "yes." It would have been an easy way out of all her difficulties. But instead, she held out her hand and said in a voice that she tried to keep steady, "Thank you. It's great of you. But I can't, you see—because I don't love you."

That night, one of those sudden summer storms came up. Fire and water fought each other back and forth across the sky, and the wind skirled and yam-

mered about the corners of the house. Stasia was kept awake by the storm as well as by her own thoughts. She sat on the window seat watching the storm through the rain-washed window pane for half the night. But in the morning she was neither tired nor heavy-eyed. She dressed and went downstairs earlier than usual. But she barely touched the coffee with which an astonished maid served her. (The butler was not down yet.) After that she made her way to the beach. The water was still rough and choppy and full of bits of driftwood. But she took a canoe from the boat house and had pushed off in it a moment later, climbing green hills of water and sliding into deep valleys as she cut through the trough of the sea in her frail craft. But she finally gained the quiet shallows in the lee of the island.

It was then that her eyes, straining ahead, searched in vain for the well-known silhouette of the "shack" against the sky. There was a pile of boards and some shingles and rough timbers scattered along the shore of the island and floating in the water near it. And there were the fragments of a little clay figure Fritjhof had modeled, already half buried in the sand. That was all. Stasia turned the canoe about and drove it through the water back toward Craggsley Ardee. And she did not look back at the island. But her thoughts turned somberly to something half remembered that she had heard once in the little stone church near Spindrift: "Our holy and beautiful house—and all our pleasant places are laid waste."

CHAPTER VI

WHEN Stasia reached the mainland again, she found Mrs. Ledoux standing on the little pier. She waved to Stasia, and smiled, but Stasia thought that her smile was one of relief as well as greeting. She looked as though some anxiety had been suddenly removed. Then she turned and spoke to the gardener's assistant, who had been busy

fitting oar locks into a boat, and he made the boat fast to the wharf with a double hitch and climbed up from the float. Mrs. Ledoux and Stasia then walked up to the house together.

Mrs. Ledoux did not ask Stasia why she had gone out to the island through such a rough sea, nor did she explain why she herself had come down to the pier at seven in the morning. Instead, she chatted gaily of the luncheon Mrs. Ruxton was to give for the American Sanitary Commission just back from service in one of the Balkan countries to recuperate and gain more of the sinews of war. She mentioned the Princess Karamichaelovitch, who would also be present, as she had been co-operating with the Commission from the first. In fact, she had been invaluable both in actual hospital organization work and in gaining the government approval for whatsoever the Commission saw fit to do.

"A charming woman. It will be delightful seeing her again," Mrs. Ledoux went on enthusiastically. "I knew her in Buda-Pesth some years ago. She was a great beauty and people were quite mad about her. There were such romantic stories about her, too. It seems that she had fallen in love with a young soldier of fortune in her father's army. She was kept a prisoner in one of the Prince's castles for years. Quite medieval, you know. Some people say that they even managed to elope together, and were married. But if that is true the marriage was annulled—or a divorce obtained. At any rate the poor Princess was quickly recaptured and locked up in the donjon keep again. And the story does not say what became of her handsome soldier. For I suppose it is only a story after all."

When Stasia returned to her room—or rather to the linen room—she carefully packed the trunk that had belonged to her uncle's college days, then went to Mrs. Ruxton's room.

"Tante" appeared to be greatly absorbed in other matters and paid Stasia scant attention when she came in. But her expression brightened perceptibly

when Stasia quietly announced her intention of leaving Meadowsweet that day.

"I don't wish to be unkind, my dear, but perhaps that would be just as well—all things considered," she remarked in a cool, soft voice. "But I should like you to arrange the menu, write out the place cards and see that Dawkins has the right sort of flowers. You might order Miles to bring the car around for the twelve o'clock train. Of course it won't be necessary for you to wait over for luncheon."

And so Stasia spent the morning in planning the details for the luncheon to the American Sanitary Commission—at which she was not asked to be present. She realized that it was to be a most important and formal affair and that Mrs. Ruxton had great hopes for it, or she would not have been detained even to make the arrangements for it. Mrs. Ruxton had really come to depend greatly on Stasia. For in spite of her many activities she was by no means a systematic person. She never knew where anything was or "where she was at" and *always* muddled her accounts. And Stasia was quite accustomed to her chaotic impulses and many inconsistencies.

However, Stasia was anxious to leave Meadowsweet, and was relieved to find that it would not be necessary for her to stay over for the luncheon. And then, at the last minute, when she had attended to everything else, she was going over the list of guests in order to make out the place cards and came suddenly on a familiar name—that of Mr. Richard Starlow. So Dick Starlow was coming! It would have been fun to see Dick again. Well, Edith would have the opportunity of meeting him again, any way.

Dick Starlow a member of the Commission! Doubtless he had been risking his life for men cram full of typhus germs whom he had never laid eyes on before, and who swarmed in the crowded hospitals over there. That was one tale about him that Edith had failed to find in *Town Topics*. And the lurid

newspaper accounts of his father's financial smash-up and subsequent suicide had not mentioned it. The Starlow place had adjoined the Dunwoodie place at Chad's Neck, and Dick had instructed Stasia in how to skin a chipmunk, how to skip a stone, and many other important matters, such as landing right when you fell out of a tree and always keeping your legs straight when you dived. Those were the days when Dick was forever in hot water, and many people had wagged their heads over him, and then when his father was unlucky and made things worse by taking a short cut to the next world, they had looked at Dick and said, "I told you so," expectantly. But Stasia, who had a penchant for lost causes, under-dogs and was without that constant affection for success that many people find convenient, had always liked Dick immensely. Yes, it would have been great to see Dick again!

But the car was at the door, and Stasia said hurried good-byes to some of the people whom she had reason to believe were her friends, then got into the tonneau, and the big machine coasted swiftly down the long, winding drive.

At the depot it was necessary to wait several minutes for the eastbound train to come in before Stasia's train could leave the station. This was an arrangement due to the single-track method which that railroad seemed to prefer. And so Stasia left the car, Miles placed her trunk on the platform, and she first handed him the last quarter from her change purse with an air of absolute casualness, then climbed up on her trunk. The car was left empty for the Commission, expected to arrive on the train from New York. And a moment later it came pounding in amid clouds of soft coal smoke.

It slowed up, and the passengers began to descend, laden with golf sticks, and other paraphernalia. Miles, exceedingly keen at picking out his special quarry, touched his cap to a small lady who had the largest dark eyes ever seen in a person of her size, and who was surrounded by a group of respectfully

admiring men. Miles had picked her out as the Princess because she had on a black frock, wore no jewels, and had the sweetest manners in the world. The chauffeur was returning triumphantly with the Princess and her escort, when a big, clean-looking young man with brown eyes set wide apart, suddenly detached himself from the others and dashed impetuously toward a small pathetic figure sitting on a very much battered trunk. Stasia jumped down from the trunk and they both talked at once for several minutes and with evident delight. Then the young man remembered that he was keeping the Princess Karamichaelovitch waiting while he talked to a girl he had found sitting on a trunk. So he dashed back to the car and made hurried apologies. Then he dragged the protesting girl back with him.

"But the Princess wants to meet you. And, honestly, she's a wonder, you know! Why you have no idea how she can work—" the young man explained.

When Dick Starlow brought Stasia to the side of the car, the Princess leaned out and looked at the girl with a swift, searching glance. Her big dark eyes had an almost terrified expression.

"Tell me, what is your name?" she asked almost fiercely. And when Stasia told her, she promptly fainted.

And so Stasia did not leave Craggsley Ardee by the twelve o'clock train that day. As she looked at the small dark lady who lay back helplessly against the leather cushions, the years seemed to roll back, and Stasia could see herself, a small lonesome child, crouching on the stairs, and in the room below she saw a dark-eyed woman bending sorrowfully above her dead father, in the flickering candle light. And when the little lady opened her eyes, she spoke to

her, and told her of her childish memories of her.

The lady put her arms around Stasia and wept unrestrainedly.

"Yes, I loved your father greatly. I gave up everything to marry him," she replied to Stasia's impetuous questioning.

And Stasia learned that the story Mrs. Ledoux had heard in Buda Pesth was quite true. John Devereux was the young soldier of fortune who had stolen the Princess and married her. He had been given a commission in her father's army after quarreling with his own father and leaving his native land. But the Princess' family had obtained a divorce for her and locked her away in the Castle again. She had been told that her baby daughter was dead, and Devereux had finally obtained possession of his child. But when the Princess still refused to marry the Princeling who had been picked out for her, a plot was formed to do away with Devereux. It was thought that the Princess might marry again if she knew he was dead. The plot succeeded only too well, in spite of the fact that the Princess learned of it at the last minute and tried to warn her husband. This then, was the story of Stasia's handsome, reckless father and her brave little big-eyed mother.

That evening Mrs. Ruxton arranged an informal reception for her guest, the dear Princess, since the latter said she must leave the following day on the twelve o'clock train. And when Stasia presented Fritzhof Torreson to her mother, the Princess Karamichaelovitch, and explained, smiling, that "he was such a delightfully amusing person, *Maman*," Harvey Blagden exclaimed, with the air of a delighted connoisseur, "By Jove! That *was* a good one!"



HUH?

By Myron Zobel

CARLOTTA was one of those quiet, self-possessed young persons who never speak unless spoken to; but whose thoughts, like silent waters, run deep. Her virtues I will not extol, but a single fault, which she had in common with many other young women of my acquaintance, I denounce for the abrupt termination of the one romance of my life. This fault was a habit she possessed, whether acquired or innate, of utterly dissipating her attention when first addressed, and then, in that complacent manner of hers, tantalizing the speaker with that much utilized and super-aggravating exclamation, "Huh?"

I pride myself on what I term my aristocratic reserve. It has ever been my aim to appear in a modest and inoffensive light, mellowed even by a tinge of conscious humility. In all of my acts I keep this object strictly in view, and when I speak, which is not often, it is in a subdued and modulated pitch. Picture then to yourself what must have been my consternation on being called upon to repeat, time and again, the remarks that I had clothed with all delicacy and expressed with all reserve.

It was last year in July that I met Carlotta while on my two-weeks' vacation at Coronado. I am not a man to fall head-long in love with any woman, but I was struck at once by the calm, sweet manner in which she treated all with whom she came in contact.

I had been observing her it must have been, I believe, for about a week, when, as I was recreating myself one day about the spacious grounds of the hotel, I came upon her, seated on a bench in the sun, alone. In a gentlemanly manner—for I abhor mashers—I raised my

hat, remarked on the clemency of the weather, and asked if I might sit beside her. She was most gracious, and nodded her assent with a smile.

We sat there I know not how long, for in her presence I knew no time. When we parted, it was with such a feeling of mutual esteem as few women have ever known or inspired.

"A feeling of mutual esteem," I have said, and justly; for we drew to one another, in the days that followed, as two people who have much in common inevitably do. One flaw I found, one only, that strained, if slightly, the perfect sympathy of our affections. That was—her chronic inattention.

I have already stated my attitude toward hasty matrimonial decision. It is, then, at the risk of inconsistency that I confess myself, within the short space of my vacation, utterly enslaved by the charms of Carlotta. I had, it is true, long contemplated with mild delight the family ties of my more fortunate relations, but never had I anticipated a so speedy realization of my own ideals. It was, therefore, with preconsidered determination that I hastened, on the last day of my second week, to the spot where we were wont to meet.

I formulated in my mind, as I approached the customary bench, my plans for the future, for I was tolerably sure of acceptance. If yes, I determined, my business could wait; if no, I should return that night to the city as I had intended, on the 9:15.

I looked up from my reverie, and there she sat, lovely and radiant as ever. Her eyes were turned away toward the mountains and she did not see me, but on her face was a tender smile that

bode well for my future. She still wore, I observed, the tiny red bud that I had bought her. I toed up quietly behind and placed my hands over her eyes. My heart fluttered as she patted them and softly laughed my name. Nobody could see us. The moment was

ripe. "Carlotta," I breathed, "I, I—will you be my wife?" She drew my hands down from her eyes and looked up at me with that questioning pucker of the brows. "Huh?" she queried.

* * * * *

I left on the 9:15.



YELLOW

By Bertha Bolling

ASPLENDOR of marigolds
Over the lea,
A glowing of tawny leaves
'Neath an old tree,
The setting sun's saffron
Flashed back by the sea.

And she of the topaz eyes
Smiling at me;
Her glorious hair shimmering,
Touched by the three:
Leaf, sunset, marigold—
O soft trinity!



A WOMAN, to be admired, need not be beautiful all the time. It is sufficient that, like Vesuvius and the Jungfrau, she have moments that one can never forget.



A WOMAN who makes speeches commits two sins: she increases the world's stock of nonsense and decreases its stock of charm.



CLEVERNESS—the art of saying what other people think.

RELATIVE VALUES

By Oscar Lewis

FROM their resting place back among the half-concealing manzanitas on the hillside the two watched through reverent eyes the departing figure of the great painter. He descended the hill very slowly, leaning heavily upon his cane, and pausing every now and then to remove his wide limp-brimmed felt hat and to pat his withered forehead with a handkerchief. And each time before he replaced the hat he would turn slowly about and wave the handkerchief jerkily toward the two watchers above. He repeated the process three times during the short descent and yet again after he had gained the foot of the trail and just before he shuffled down the graveled walk and was lost to view among the trees that surrounded the white cottage.

When the other had disappeared, Canfield shifted his field easel closer and with his chamois commenced the obliteration of certain portions of his drawing that the great man had criticized. His companion continued to gaze down toward the white roof of the cottage among the trees at the foot of the hill. After a time Canfield heard the half-restrained sound of her sigh.

She began to talk finally, speaking in the serious, gravely considering tone that Canfield had come to know very well during the last seven days. "I wonder," she said, "how it all seems to you; this marriage of mine."

Canfield stared across at his drawing. "Why, I—" he began and then paused, smiling with vague politeness.

"I've been trying to puzzle out your views ever since you joined us here; wondering just what your real thoughts

are. But I suppose they are the usual ones?"

"The usual ones? Certainly not—er, that is," he recovered himself quickly, "what *are* the usual views?"

"Shall I tell you?" she asked, her voice becoming quietly tense. "I surely am well fitted for the task, for I've overheard the usual view—or scraps of it—thousands of times during these past five months. It has rung in my ears; at exhibitions, at receptions, dinners, even in hotel lobbies and railroad stations, until there are times when I could scream aloud at sound of it. The words—or the tone—seldom varies; I can repeat them automatically, 'yes, yes, over there. See! That's Linder's bride; Linder the painter, you know. Yes, really. Only nineteen they say, just a child. He? Oh, seventy, at the very least.' And then there's a polite, well-bred silence, or a low laugh that is neither polite nor well-bred."

Canfield kept up the pretense of interest in his sketch.

"And when finally I manage to get across the room and out of earshot, as like as not I find that someone just behind is telling the story of how I came to meet my husband. There is little room for originality there either, apparently, for it is always told in the same way; how last year while I was still at the convent some of my sketches that were sold at a charity bazaar came to the attention of the great Linder, and how he wrote and offered to take me for a pupil, and how I went, and how—this part never varies—how 'two months later they were married,' and—Well," she broke off, "that's the conventional view, and a view that I have

become reconciled to, though I won't pretend that I understand it. Tell me, why do people regard this as they do?"

"Because—because it is unusual, perhaps," suggested Canfield. He stole a glance at her face and saw that her serious eyes—"visionary" was his own private word for them—were still dreaming down toward the white cottage roof below.

"All things that are unusual are not spoken of in just that manner. But after all," she added, breaking off her half-puzzled, reflective tone, "this question of what the majority think is of little consequence. With you, though, it is somehow different. You yourself are an artist, and you are a pupil of his, as I was. And, of course, you cannot but feel a deep awe of him and reverence for his art and his genius. That is true?"

Canfield inclined his head slowly.

"Then," she spoke very seriously, "considering these things, does it seem so inexplicable to you? Don't suppose, though, that I imagine myself a martyr, as one very ridiculous acquaintance of my husband who declared that he understood my motives, tried to make me seem. When I consider my position I am very humble and very conscious of my own inferiority; but I am also very completely happy. People doubt this; I wonder why?"

Canfield leaned back upon one elbow and for a moment regarded her in silence. She was toying absently with one of the sprawling ribbons of her limp straw sunhat that lay on the grass between them, and gazing off toward the cottage concealed among the trees at the foot of the hill. He was conscious of the fresh, vigorous color of her cheeks, the rounded, not too short pillar of her neck, the hint of healthy smooth curves beneath the loose airiness of her summer frock; of her whole bearing that advertised unconsciously the normal vigor and life of very youthful maturity.

The redolent late spring breeze drowsily stirred the branches of the manzanitas about them. Canfield

stretched himself out more comfortably upon the grass, his well-set head still resting upon one crooked arm, for his artist's eyes were loath to leave the living picture before him. She could not have been unconscious of his continued gaze, yet she made no move to avoid it, and for a time they remained motionless, though Canfield noted that a slightly warmer glow slowly overspread her cheek. She stirred after a moment and sighed, half unconsciously.

"I don't think I care to draw any more to-day," she broke the silence finally. "Shall we go down?"

Canfield fastened shut his drawing case and folded his own easel and hers. Then he reached down to help her up. She hesitated just an instant and then placed both hands in his, gazing up at the same time until she met his eyes.

"Pull away!" she said, and they both laughed in half-restrained tones as he whisked her to her feet. And then, very suddenly, their laughter ceased. Their eyes still held each other's; a quick look of half-fear swept through hers, and they clouded and her curving lashes drooped slowly. Canfield glimpsed the red oval of her slightly parted lips and the agitated flutter of the soft fabric below the low neck of her frock. And the next moment he had swept her to him and felt the thrill of her lips burning warmly against his.

Almost immediately she flung herself free; her breath coming in gasps, her burning face turned from his. Canfield reached down slowly and gathered up their drawing materials.

"Come," he said, very gently, and they started down toward the white cottage among the trees.

Neither spoke during the descent, and Canfield, conscious that their unusually restrained attitude would attract attention, searched unavailingly for something to say. It was the woman, of course, who broke the silence.

"What were we talking about," she asked, "—up there?"

Canfield sighed with relief. "You were saying how thoroughly and com-

pletely happy your married life had been," he reminded her. "And you were wondering that people should doubt that fact."

"Oh," she said, and became immediately silent. Canfield noticed a momentary frown sweep across her brow which he concluded was none of his affair to attempt to define.

They parted in the little hall without a word and Canfield sought out the great painter and told him that he had received intelligence that made it imperative for him to return to town at once. He left an hour later.

A week later the Linders themselves were back in town. They stayed only a single day, however, leaving the next afternoon for Barwick where the great landscape painter was to receive an honorary degree at the University.

The painter's temperamental young wife regained much of her former high spirits directly they had left their cottage in the country and returned to the attentive crowds of the street. Here the well-known figure of the great Linder was everywhere recognized. If they paused for a moment in the street, the familiar buzz of conversation would once more circle about and the next moment the old painter would find himself the center of a hundred admiring eyes. And his wife's cheeks would burn warmly with pleasure and the doubts that had accompanied her throughout those last restless days and nights would vanish as ridiculous nightmares before the sunlight of this public homage to her genius husband.

Why, after all, she asked herself, had she allowed her faith to weaken? How foolish to doubt her privilege of reverence; to imagine that this companionship of genius was not her fullest and completest destiny! She recalled those indefinable, unnamed emotions that recently had risen up from nowhere to torment her, and she actually laughed at their vague phantoms; her young head up-tilted, animated red lips parted, her visionary eyes filled with a deep and calm self-surety.

The stately ceremony at the university served still further to strengthen her faith. She followed the slow-moving line up through the trees toward the great open-air chapel; her eyes upon her husband up near the front, draped in his black robes and raised to a high spiritual dignity amid those calm surroundings. She sat near while the honorary degrees were conferred, her husband's along with those of other great men. She listened to the mellow voice of the old university president. "Perpetrator of the transient beauties in nature; who with your oils and your brushes and the alchemy of your genius, reach out and catch the fleeting fires of the summer sunset; whose canvases bring to city galleries and into our own libraries the restful peace of spring-flecked meadows, the beat of winter rains upon the leafy carpet of the forest. You who love nature, and whom nature loves; Alden Linder, we make you Master of Arts."

"This is real; this is reality," the phrase ran constantly through her thoughts during those long moments of happiness and throughout the congratulatory reception that followed. "Why doubt reality? What else dares life to hold up beside this?"

They reached their hotel finally several hours after sunset and went immediately to their rooms. The day had been a long one; the great painter was very tired. Very tenderly, as if he were a child, his wife prepared him for bed, and threw back the coverlets, smoothing them and the linen sheets, and when he lay upon them, drawing them back over his thin form.

She kissed him softly on the forehead. "My genius," she murmured in a tone of deep reverence. And then she smiled on seeing that he was already asleep, and stole softly through the door and into her own room adjoining.

Slowly she prepared to retire, living again vividly the events of the day. But of a sudden she found these reflections wisped into oblivion. It was a mere glance of one of her own bare

arms reflected in the mirror across the room, yet she saw it with something approaching physical shock. She stood gazing down at the velvety whiteness of it, at its flexible firmness, its solidity, with puzzled fascination. She walked haltingly across to the oval mirror and stood gazing at what it reflected. Her hair streamed down loosely and she ran her fingers through its glossy, living texture and then swept it back, exposing the white sweep of her shoulders rising above the beribboned fleecy collar of the airy garment she wore. She

gazed with almost startled intensity at her own face; at its flawless round curves; at the lips, parted for the passage of her quickened breath; at the red fires of youth burning in her cheeks.

A wave of mental pain diffused her features. She tore herself from the mirror and stumbled across the room. "He is a genius," she told herself, her small hands clinched desperately, "a splendid, wonderful artist; a genius—" But the words trailed off into nothing, and she flung herself, sobbing, full-length upon the bed.



FROM A "BABY'S BIOGRAPHY" BOOK

By Ronald V. Cross

March 14,—

OUR precious little child was three days old to-day. They say I look prettier than ever,—so sweet and maternal. I am wearing the pink chiffon with lace that Jack bought me. I suppose that I shall have to miss the Jones party and the Brays' week-end, but I feel that it is all a beautiful sacrifice for our little one.

* * * * *

March 18,—

To-day was Tuesday. Mrs. Van Buen came to see me with Lady Driesel and her little boy. The room was just filled with flowers. They say the Brays' house-party was an awful bore; still, I am sorry I missed it. Jack has bought me the dearest little ring.

* * * * *

March 26,—

Jack and I are going out to-night, to the theatre—for the first time after. I guess this will be my last entry in the "Biography"; there is nothing more to say about our little darling. . . .

* * * * *



EVERY woman is torn between a desire to hear what is said of her by other women and a fear that it will be the truth.

THE PLOT SICKENS

By Howard P. Rockey

EVERY stenographer, manicurist and shop girl in the United States knew of Wilfred Vance. The whole sisterhood devoured the wonderfully glamorous stories he composed for certain fifteen-cent magazines that give to the uninitiated and unsophisticated a fascinating picture of the doings of the idle rich—for whose soft, white and bejewelled hands a thoughtful and benevolent Devil finds the most entrancing of mischiefs to perform.

Vance's stories dealt with "life"—with risqué week-end parties, luxurious and sensational dinners and balls, flirtations between beautiful débutantes and heroes of the polo field. There was about them an atmosphere of rustling silks, subdued whispers, glittering jewels, the honk of motor horns, in fact, all of the sparkle and refined wickedness popularly attributed to fashionable society by those who depend upon the Sunday supplements—and writers like Wilfred Vance—for their information.

So, in view of the worship the average innocent maiden and the average maiden innocently-wise bestowed upon him and his stories, it was not strange, perhaps, that Vivienne Marsh fell for him. Even editors who struggled along on meagre salaries, fell for Vance, the while they despised the stuff they bought from him, envied the sums they paid him, and cursed the public taste that forced them to buy such rot.

But with Vivienne the situation was different. She was secretary to the particular magazine editor who contributed most liberally to Vance's income.

Several times each week she announced the elegant, fascinating Vance

in the editorial sanctum. Usually Vivienne was cold and haughty, even scornful in her attitude toward those who came to peddle manuscripts. She knew each type, from the luxuriously dressed and marvelously painted damsel who wrote only for the art of it—who hoped eventually to go on the stage in something really artistic—to the ragged-cuffed, whiskey-smelling young man who rushed in with a hastily typed manuscript for which he eagerly requested twenty dollars—cash.

But Vance—ah, Vance was different. Good-looking, immaculately, if not tastefully, dressed—the personification of financial literary success, from his tan colored spats to his monocle. Vivienne did not know that some men are born to a monocle—that some achieve it—while others thrust it upon themselves. Vance belonged to the latter class, but he never actually thrust it into his eye because he wasn't to the monocle born, and couldn't hold it there.

The door would swing open peremptorily and Vance would saunter elegantly in. With a courteous, yet condescending, bow, the great man would smile slightly at Vivienne and in a most polished yet never to be questioned tone direct that she herald his coming to the editor. Openly, Vivienne read Vance's stories, timidly shuddered and was properly horrified. Secretly she just loved them and worshiped the man who could conceive such delightful wickedness.

Then, when Vance would stroll leisurely out of the office again—and with a critical eye appraise Vivienne from the toes of her pretty patent leather

slippers to the uppermost blonde hair of her saucy head, she would palpitate and sigh faintly. Oh, to be one of the women he wrote about—to be courted, sought after—yes, deceived by a roué like Wilfred Vance! What girl could help loving him? He wrote such charming love scenes—was *so* blasé—the living image of those fascinatingly devilish men he portrayed so skilfully with his typewriter.

Then Vivienne would gaze longingly out of the window and watch Vance step into his limousine—with a chauffeur uniformed to match—the latter, however, perfumed with liquor, cigarettes and gasoline. Vivienne would stand in a trance for twenty minutes after each visit. Then a tear would come into her pretty blue and wide-open eyes, and she would settle down at her desk and steal a first reading of the manuscript Vance had just left. She, insignificant, innocent little Vivienne Marsh, was the *very first* in all the world to read the soul-stirring manuscripts of the great Wilfred Vance!

Gradually, becoming educated as a result of these first readings, Vivienne began to assume something nearly approaching the Vance exposé-of-society manner. Her clothes became "fetching"—that was what Vance termed such costumes. Her lips became carmine, and wonderfully compelling; her cheeks took on a flush that had heretofore only appeared when she was reading a particularly daring paragraph in one of Vance's novels.

And Vance, always seeking grist for his type-mill, and flattering himself that he was a real realist, who lived the life of which he wrote, began to observe Vivienne with increasing interest. He saw the worship in her eyes and approved of it. Here was a girl with brains and true appreciation. He even paused at her little desk, and while twirling his elegantly pointed moustache and swinging his stick carelessly, discussed with her certain passages in his manuscripts. Vance had found this a very satisfactory form of approach—

it usually cast a lurid halo about his handsome forehead—and made him seem a very devil of a fellow to susceptible young women—and an interesting prospect for young women less susceptible and more sophisticated.

But Vivienne fell for it. She hadn't learned to be cold and calculating like Vance's villainesses; she was more of the soft, coddly, trusting type, the eighteen-year-old girl who never-had-a-chance, that was invariably the heroine of a Vance novel.

And one marvelous Saturday morning Vance came in with a peculiar smile on his romantically dissipated face. Vivienne knew that smile; she had read about it often. She almost knew what he was going to say to her, and she trembled in terrified delight.

"Half holiday?" he asked, and Vivienne felt disappointed—but nodded. "Car's downstairs," he went on, smiling from those glorious dark eyes of his. "How about a little run out to Longue Vue and luncheon tête-à-tête?"

This was more in form, and Vivienne flushed prettily. She wasn't feigning, but she felt highly satisfied with herself, for that was just what she knew she ought to do. Vance would have made one of his heroines do exactly that, and she knew he would approve, that she was the real thing in persecuted heroines. Vance showed his appreciation of her orthodoxy by smiling with vague tenderness, with just a touch of pity and self-reproach. Then he strolled nonchalantly into the great editor's office.

Vivienne shuddered and clasped her hands. She knew she should not go—but *she was going*. What girl of her type could resist the fascination of Wilfred Vance—what girl in all the subway and elevated cars would not give her immortal soul in exchange for the invitation he had just extended to Vivienne? Now she was going to *see*, to *live* the life of which she had read so much, the discreetly naughty, and almost wicked existence he portrayed so convincingly yet with properly cautious daring, as it were, a hint of still more

naughty things that everyone knew about, everyone knows, but which, of course, no one openly discusses.

At last he came out, just as Vivienne was putting the finishing daubs of powder upon her soft white cheeks. Her eyes sparkled, and she was all too conscious of the imitation fur coat that fell to the tops of her slender, shapely ankles. Of course, Vivienne now wore white spats over her tiny slippers. Who doesn't?

Together they descended in the crowded lift, his arm gently pressing hers. Other eager, chattering stenographers casting envious glances at Vivienne and adoring looks at her handsome companion. And they saw Vivienne enter the lavender-colored limousine, heard the door bang, and saw the two settle down upon the magnificent boudoir upholstery. Then they shook their heads solemnly and wagged their little tongues maliciously.

"What he can see in *that little mutt*!" sniffed Sara Lefkowitz scornfully. Sarah had consulted the mirror and her imagination, and was of the opinion that Vance must have used her as his inspiration in picturing the Countess Olga Nazareffski in his story, "The Dancing Devilless"—whose whirlwind career had set the youth of Manhattan's very best families off on a sad career—until a chorus of pretty milkmaids rescued them from this Vampire's clutches. Even Vance observed the Editorial Edict—happy endings.

But alas for Sarah—great authors may write of alluring dark-eyed beauty, of white skins, and lithe bodies. The fact remains that they oftentimes prefer very simple and mentally undeveloped little stenographers of a decidedly blonde type. Probably the exhaustion of typing such consuming passion tales makes them seek restful relief in the company, if not the arms, of more modest creatures.

However, the fawn-colored limousine threaded its way up Fifth avenue, cut into the more open roads—and finally arrived at the roadhouse where Vance and Vivienne were to lunch. He

smoked practically all the time, but he did not ask Vivienne to have one, and to her surprise and disquiet, he did not even try to kiss her.

But then his manner suddenly changed. He asked her to have a cocktail, and with a pretty blush and a fascinating hesitation, she accepted it. Then, through the rather elaborate luncheon, during which Vance drank heavily of French Vichy, he discussed his work—monologued it, rather. He told her of the sources of his plots, of the wild feverish life he was forced to lead in order to collate such drastically daring situations. It was small wonder that young women were influenced by skillful and unscrupulous men who possessed unlimited time, money and wit. Small wonder, too, that bright, handsome young men with brilliant futures before them succumbed to the wiles of calculating females trained in every art of the allurements that leads to destruction.

"But, naturally, Vivienne, my dear, *you* know nothing of *such* a world," he said gently, with a far away look in his dreamy eyes. "I only hope—I have *always* hoped—that my stories—poor as they may be—might serve to help girls like *you*. It has been my ambition to call a spade a spade—but sometimes the editors won't let me do it. I believe that the great moral questions of the day should be openly and frankly discussed. By presenting the naked but not *stark* naked truth to our young men and women—by making them see that 'the way of the transgressor is hard,' I am quoting, you will recall—we writers accomplish a noble purpose—"

"But you earn a great deal of money doing it, don't you?" Vivienne asked innocently—and, Vance thought, irrelevantly.

"Naturally, the creative mind must be provided with bodily comfort," he explained affably. "No great imaginative work can be accomplished unless the material welfare of the artist is provided for."

"I should love to uplift humanity—to teach great moral lessons to erring

young girls," Vivienne confided to him, "at the word rate and bodily comfort you receive from the magazines." This last she did not confide, but thought.

Vance looked at her strangely. His eyes seemed to drink in her simple beauty, and he revelled in the innocence of her soul—the pureness of her untainted mind.

"Little woman," he murmured, and his heavily ringed hand patted hers as it lay upon the white table cloth. "Vivienne, dear—you could—you *can* help me—if you will!"

Vivienne thrilled. *That* was what she was waiting for. It was coming now.

"I've led rather a rotten, useless sort of life," he told her, with a note of regret in his soft voice. "I've wanted to do something worth while—and now I've started to do it—but without you it's going to be empty—useless—"

In spite of herself, Vivienne interrupted him. "Wasn't that what Lord Amhurst de Bellville said to the little barmaid at the Sign of the Magenta Cow?" she asked, trying hard to remember.

Vance frowned and seemed embarrassed. "One puts much of one's self into really serious writing," he explained. "You know I live with my characters—I feel that they are actually *me*—these brain children of my type—I mean—"

"I understand," said Vivienne, helpfully.

He was paying the check and now he helped her on with her imitation fur coat, smiling patronizingly and thinking how beautiful she would be in the magnificent sables he meant to buy her, how delightful her pretty little hands would be in the brilliant rings he meant her to have.

They were in the car, that marvelous genius-bearing chariot that Vance's uplift work had produced—and supported. It was like the Pumpkin Coach of Cinderella to Vivienne, but now she felt very far from the sooty hearth and accompanying drudgery experienced by the fairy story heroine.

Now—at last—his arm slipped about

her. She felt his warm breath against her cheek—and his little pointed moustache tickled just a little—rather delightfully, she thought.

Her heart beat faster—her frail body trembled—and she gave way to him completely. "Dear heart! Wonderful girl!" he murmured—quite according to Hoyle and the works of Wilfred Vance—but then came the anti-climax—"Will you marry me?" he asked and *meant* it.

Vivienne started. She felt tricked—yet helpless. What could she say—what could she do? And then, realizing the hopelessness of it all, she gave up all her ideals and softly answered "Yes."

"So," as Vance himself could have written, he had chronicled his own life. "So they were married." Vivienne, the simple yet beautiful editor's secretary, became the wife of the great author. Her childish garments disappeared, and were replaced with wonderful gowns in the latest mode. She had countless boots of innumerable designs and manners of buttoning or lacing. She learned to use a lorgnon far better than Vance could ever hope to manipulate his monocle, and she even carried a swagger stick. She adopted a Pomeranian and longed for a monkey, but she failed to discover the wild, dissolute life Vance had told her about, the feverish, glittering existence of which he wrote with a typewriter now more prolific than ever, for Vance fond his simple little wife an expensive luxury.

Day by day she sat in the richly furnished study, with its finely chosen artistic surroundings. Very silently she sat—still and lovely—while the slender white fingers of her husband made the keys of her typewriter fly with the skill of a linotyper on a morning paper. Words, in an unceasing flow, burning, passionate, suggestive words that sent thrills through the hearts of the young and amorous, and cold chills up and down the spines of editors who had to read Vance's work for a living.

Their only consolation was the fact

that Vance had to *write* it for the same reason.

But Vivienne grew tired of this manuscript wickedness, this scarred and sordid life of luxury, of which she read reams and reams each day, daintily correcting with her gold mounted fountain pen, the typographical errors made by her busy husband's flying fingers and gasping at his outspokenness. He was becoming famous. The magazines to which he contributed began publishing twice a month issues and even contemplated becoming weeklies—perhaps dailies—for the printing presses could not keep pace with the magic typewriter of Wilfred Vance.

He assumed a more dignified air, a preoccupied uplift - of - humanity - De-Maupassant-and-O-Henry manner. He became a toiler and even forgot to toy with his monocle in moments of carefully studied preoccupation. And still Vivienne hoped in vain for the taste of that life which was becoming an absolute horror to her on paper.

Imagine, can you, sitting day in and day out, arrayed like a lily of the field in competition with the Queen of Sheba—or was it Solomon?—reading page after page of naughtiness and passionate wooing—and hearing from one's august spouse, nothing but the click of the typewriter! Such was the existence that was slowly driving Mrs. Vivienne Vance mad.

She longed for the days when the office boy and the first reader in the editorial department came cheerily by her desk and flirted with her. She mourned the thrills that were once hers when she read the neatly typed words of Wilfred Vance, and had envied him the mad career he so skillfully recorded with his pen. She always imagined that he wrote with a pen in those days, and supposed a pretty secretary, to whom he made love as she typed off his stories.

Now she suggested innovations—designed a wonderful lavender-colored manuscript paper for him. It just matched the luxurious limousine, and had a gorgeously embossed monogram

in the upper left-hand corner of every page. True, the sheets cost two cents each, but Vance was becoming one of our best paid writers.

Then came the terribly delicious moment when Vivienne knew she no longer loved her husband. It was on the day when young Archibald Tome called from the office of the newest magazine that had been established to help in the terrific task of publishing Vance's output. He was a good looking boy, hardly older than Vivienne. He wore bone-rimmed spectacles, and wore them with wonderful charm. He looked at Vivienne as a cat might look at a dainty white mouse. The idea stirred him deeply.

He wanted to fold her in his arms, and she knew it, and wanted him to do so. But for a long while he didn't. Then one day, Vance was out when Tome came. He was down town arranging with a famous editor for an increase in word rates. At least that was what he *said* he was doing. Perhaps, Vivienne thought, he is cheating and getting a bit of real color on the sly.

So it was that when she began reading some of Vance's latest manuscript to Archie Tome, she happened to glance up and saw the worship in his eyes. "How wonderful!" the youth exclaimed fervently. "No one but Vance could have written that—no one but the fortunate man who sits with *you* by his side every day—who has *you* as his inspiration!"

Vivienne gasped. Never before had she heard such words spoken—except quite recently, since Vance had started to use a phonographic dictating machine when his nimble, elegant fingers grew too tired to pound the keys. Never—never, however, had such fervent speech been poured into her own shell-like ears.

She arose, her breast heaving, her eyes gazing wonderingly at Archie Tome. He, too, arose and stepped quickly toward her. He folded her in his arms and drew her close to him. He covered her burning cheeks with

kisses and whispered softly into her ear.

She was blind with the ecstasy of the moment. Both were oblivious to the entire world. But at that moment the velvet hangings parted and into the dimly lit room stepped Vance. For a moment he stood stock still, amazed, horrified. Then every inch of manhood in him called out wildly. His heart beat faster and his eyes glittered. He drew a revolver from his pocket.

With one bound he was beside the phonograph—slipped on a disc—and feverishly pressed the key that set the machine in motion.

Its slight clicking startled the young lovers, and with a flush of burning shame, Vivienne drew hastily away and faced her husband with drooping eyes. Young Tome grew pale and his teeth chattered audibly.

"Hold that!" Vance shrieked in rage. "Go on! Talk as you *were* talking when I came in. That's *realism*—it will sell more magazines than anything I could write in a million years. Damn you, make love to each other—and *make it out loud!*"

The revolver pointed ominously at the two—and after a moment's hesitation, they again embraced tenderly—seeking mutual protection in each other's arms. Vainly the young editor sought for passionate phrases; vainly he looked over Vivienne's shoulder for some means of escape. Meanwhile he kissed her, raved at Vance in a trembling, yet rather clever manner, and Vivienne repeated, improvised, and shouted in exaggerated tones the wildest of confessions she had ever heard, or read of, a Vance-conceived erring wife, making to her Vance-portrayed lover or outraged husband.

At last the merciless author-husband was satisfied. The third record was filled and he was eager to set to work.

He put the revolver down upon the study table and it fell open, revealing a lack of cartridges in the cylinders.

Vance always kept it on his person because, he told Vivienne, he was in constant fear of the wrath of irate husbands, so frequent were his own love affairs.

"Tome," he said very solemnly, "because you are merely a child, because you did not understand when you took advantage of my little girl-wife's inexperience, I forgive you. Go!" With dramatic effect, he pointed toward the velvet hangings, and now, with bowed head, and a despairing glance at Vivienne, the young lover walked slowly out of the room.

Vivienne began to sob and sank into a great leather chair before the fire, where a gas log blazed merrily but fitfully, through dust-stopped perforations.

For several minutes Vance stared down at her, a pitying look upon his drawn features.

"My dear," he said tenderly, "do not ask me to forgive you—yet I shall never forget this." She was crying bitterly now.

He smiled—and she shrank from him. "When I write this story—with myself as the central character and you as the trusted wife who played a great author false—I shall have done the crowning work of my career."

She looked up at him imploringly through her tears. "Wilfred!" she pleaded—"surely you cannot—you *will* not commercialize the one blot upon our married happiness! You cannot hold me up to the world—in—in this unfeeling way—make *me* suffer this terrible punishment—even in the interests of your art!"

"Whaddye mean I can't?" he asked. "My dear, an art is an art and a wife is a wife—but you've got to have a *plot* for a story. And nobody knew that better than August Simpson when he quit selling silks and started writing under the name of Wilfred Vance. Story writing may not be a business, but there's money in it if you know how to get it out!"

READJUSTMENT

By Harry Kemp

DETERMINED to effect a complete change in their life together, Richard Murray rose that morning very early. He slipped out of bed stealthily, very careful not to wake his wife.

The cook and the other servant, who had, in a few short weeks, already learned to take full advantage of the late rising of their master and mistress, were not yet up.

So Murray dressed hurriedly and went out into the kitchen to prepare his own breakfast. This merely as a matter of protest, for he might easily have gone to a restaurant.

He burned the toast and swore. He threw the black, smoking pieces of bread into the sink. He had better luck on a second trial.

He did not bother to carry the things into the dining-room, but plumped down where he was, at the kitchen table, and ate his two hard-boiled eggs (which he had wanted soft) and his buttered toast (a little too crisp, but otherwise passable).

He gulped down a cup of luke-warm, brackish coffee. . . .

Feeling still unsatisfied, more from emotional unrest than hunger, he dug up half a grape-fruit from a remote corner of the ice-box.

He was wondering whether he should not make himself miserable for the rest of the day by going off without kissing his wife good-bye, when she unexpectedly appeared in the doorway, her dressing-gown flung hastily over her night dress, a sleepy but perturbed look in her eyes.

"What in the world are you doing up so early, darling?"

"I wanted to get down to the office in reasonable time to-day," he answered, a shade sharper than he intended. . . .

As he stood by the door, ready to leave, her arms, glowing through her thin apparel, slid around his neck, and their mere physical warmth softened and placated him. Before he was fully aware of the change his sternness had broken down, and he was talking and returning her kisses with passionate diminutives of endearment.

"Good-bye, dear!"

"Good-bye!"

He went swinging down the hall. His mannishness, the masculinity of his close-cut hair, the set of his hat on his head, sent through her a fresh warmth and suffusion of tenderness.

Impulsively she called him back . . . just to kiss him again.

She readjusted his tie with little strokings and touches; first pulling it awry that it might need fixing. She flecked a dust mote from the lapel of his coat. . . .

In the meantime, he heard the elevator for which he had just rung come to a stop at his floor. After a few minutes' waiting the door of it slid shut with a clang, and it buzzed downward again, making a muffled noise like an angry bee caught in a flower. . . .

"What did you call me back for?"

"I wanted another kiss," she laughed with mischievous amorousness.

At that, he whirled on his heel in annoyance, and rang the bell a second time. . . .

The elevator boy gave him a quick, inquisitive look of resentment.

II

"DAMN it, it's useless, it seems, to try to make Elsie understand that a man has his work in the world!" he complained to himself, on the way downtown.

This was the first time he had tried to make her understand, but the revolt had been fomenting so long within him that he felt that she *must* have perceived it beyond necessity of any verbal utterance. . . .

The truth was, however, that he was secretly pleased by her lack of practicality. To him this trait seemed a lovable, feminine characteristic, one of the attributes of true womanhood.

If she had shown any perception of the fact that, because of his passionate devotion to her, he had let his business drift into dereliction, it would not only have irritated him, it would have humiliated him. . . .

The first week of the honeymoon one can hardly expect a man to think much of extra-marital affairs. Murray had been no exception to the human rule. But, after that, the continuation of his heedless infatuation had led him, each day, to push off, luxuriously, further and still further into futurity, his return to the world of every day.

For it was not until the first three weeks had gone by like the melting of a snowflake that he settled down to any semblance, even, of business regularity. And, even then he only dropped in at his office every day at 10 or 11 o'clock, staying just long enough to look over his correspondence and dictate a few letters. He found that everything, seemingly, ran as smoothly as ever. He began to believe, proudly, that he had evolved a system so efficient that it almost ran of itself.

Then, inevitably, came the day when he detected a laxness here, a loosening of the parts there, in what he had held to be a perfect machine.

This morning the office force was evidently taken unawares by his early arrival. For they had not yet settled down to the day's work. One of the

girls stood talking with another who was sitting idly before her typewriter, from which she had not yet drawn the cover. . . .

The one who was talking stopped parenthetically after a "he sez"—but only to lower her voice and continue the gossip. . . .

Everybody was in those leisurely stages of beginning to work which are the luxury of the employee when those in authority are not in sight. But they acted as nonchalantly in Murray's presence as if he were only a casual visitor.

At first he was too dumbfounded to be angry . . . he looked at his watch to make sure he had made no mistake . . . then he glanced around to find the office manager, who was nowhere to be seen.

Not finding him, he called to the nearest clerk, whose name he recovered with difficulty.

"Dunn . . . has Mr. Jennings come in yet?"

"No, sir!"

"Very well."

As the petulant sound of their employer's voice rang through the room, all the girls began to bustle into activity, real or fictitious. . . .

Murray went into his own office, not through the door marked "private," but through the door in the back, which gave on the main office. He walked in with an air of condemnatory preoccupation that all the force at once felt. His wrath, by this time, was in full conflagration.

By his silent entry he had expressed to his minor employees all that his dignity would allow. He could express himself more definitely to his manager. He now transferred all his anger to the latter. For had he not trusted Jennings implicitly, leaving every detail in his charge?

It was nearly time for lunch when the manager appeared.

Some of the employees were already putting on their hats and outside garments for the noon hour.

Abruptly Jennings entered the private office through the door marked "pri-

vate." . . . He was reflectively whistling a reminiscent snatch of popular song.

"Good morning, Jennings," began Murray, asperity in his voice. . . .

"Good morning, Mr. Murray," answered Jennings, startled at finding him there.

"What's the matter out there? Do they think it's a holiday?" pursued Murray, nervously plunging his hands through a pile of correspondence. . . .

"There are orders here that should have been attended to several days ago," he continued, before Jennings could answer. . . . "I see we'll have to have a shake-up," he went on, whirling abruptly around in his swivel chair. . . . "Tell the people out there that, from to-day, everybody must get down to business—or get out!"

The suave Jennings was jabbed into a vigorous defense of himself. . . .

First he verged on remarks almost insulting.

Then he tendered his resignation. . . .

And incidentally he let Murray understand that he was going into business for himself . . . the same line as his own. . . .

III

MURRAY spent all that afternoon and stayed till late that night, looking carefully into his affairs. He was alert at last.

And for the first time since his marriage, he telephoned Elsie that he could not possibly be home to dinner . . . that he had important business to attend to.

But it was in vain that he tried to explain . . . she pleaded against his not coming home, as if it were to be a separation of a year, not a few hours . . . and after keeping him talking at the other end as long as she could, with a break of vague distress in her voice, she hung up the receiver.

As he sank deeper and deeper into his neglected work, he no longer in his heart upbraided Jennings for having been culpably human. He saw clearly

that it was all his own fault for having let the reins run slack.

It was nearly midnight before he leaned back, satisfied. There he sat for a while, reflectively smoking a strong, black cigar. . . .

Yes, it was much worse than he could have guessed . . . he had been peeping over the edge of an abyss of mismanagement into a chaos of failure and bankruptcy.

He bitterly reflected that he would probably have to do what he had always before refused to consider—take a partner—break his business—the child of his own brain and foresight—into halves . . . a fact which made him grieve as deeply as if he had been called upon to share a mistress with another. . . .

The gust of personal achievement seemed now to be the only thing that did not leave a bad after-taste. . . .

He was having a revulsion from the soft life he had been living . . . these first weeks of his marriage now seemed to have been effeminate and altogether beneath a man's dignity. . . .

And again women appeared to him as they had in his bachelor days—an unavoidable necessity, and yet a continual hindrance . . . beings who worked no harm as long as one's relations with them were light, volatile, ephemeral, not definite, with whom it was well enough to pass the unoccupied hour; but whose natural instincts led them blindly to thwart, cramp, and hinder a man's efficiency, once they had, legally or emotionally, gathered him in to themselves.

He left his office behind and walked several blocks with his overcoat on his arm before he thought to put it on. . . .

The sky over the city was vast and clear, and sprinkled with a multitude of stars—clear winter stars of such brilliancy that even the concentrated glare of the gigantically lighted city could not dim them to the sight. . . .

The air was so crisp that they not only sparkled—they seemed to snap forth their light. . . .

Murray walked and walked, caught up in rapid thought; his legs carried him of themselves . . . the faster he thought the quicker his gait became. . . .

IV

How he got there so quickly he did not know—but the deluge of naked light crashing into his eyes, the pushing throngs, the doors pouring out eddies and turmoils of people, the rapid whirling of black-bodied taxis in continuous lines like gigantic beetles pouring across the inter-space of blare and glare from engulfing night—all these sights told him that he had at last gained Broadway.

His mouth and throat were dry as if he had been breathing the fine white dust of a country road in summer . . . the reek from the taxis made his strained eyes smart.

To-night he was islanded apart in the midst of multitudes. . . .

He might as well walk on home. The walk would clear his brain, do him good. . . .

He dropped thinking of his business . . . with a curious aloofness, he now began to consider his domestic life . . . even to appraise Elsie, as if she were not his wife, but another's.

Like black and white set side by side, her faults and virtues stood forth in contradistinction, with a clearness almost visual. They no longer blended into a lovable personality the very weaknesses of which he had hitherto delighted in and encouraged. . . .

But this mood of domestic and conjugal analysis was too piercing, too fatiguing, to be more than momentary.

There came upon him a mental laxity. . . . He divagated in the general direction of his club. . . . Before he had gone a block he changed his mind. . . .

No, he wanted to be among strangers, where his disquiet would run no chance of breaking through into observation . . . would not be immediately sensed by friends who knew his idiosyncrasies. . . . Friends would be an annoyance at this time.

In his present mood he wanted to sit and drink—apart—and observe people who were strangers to him. It would, somehow or other, comfort him.

He stepped into an obscure café. . . . a sort of night club where overdressed and underdressed men and women, many of them mere girls and boys, were tangoing up and down.

Here and there a woman, fat and middle-aged, her face lacquered and porcelainized with attempts at rejuvenescence, was swaying and interweaving ridiculously with some neatly tailored youth of countenance as hard and fixed as sculptured stone.

A man with a bald spot as big as a silver dollar in the exact center of sparse, iron-grey hair, was wagging a girl about, a girl whose appearance was so young that one looked again to see if her hair were not down her back in thick brown braids.

Murray ordered a cocktail . . . then another . . . and sat alone and apart at a table in the only neglected corner in that seething place.

At a table not far away from where the musicians played sat two men and three girls. The faces of the latter were also fresh and clear and young, like that of the girl who danced so assiduously, smilingly, with the bald-spotted man.

Murray could not help letting his eye dwell occasionally on these girls. He noticed one especially, whose glance had several times crossed his . . . on which he would look off impersonally beyond her . . . and she, beyond him. . . .

After a few minutes of such procedure, a flicker of a smile warmed the corners of her mouth, and he let his eyes kindle tentatively into a scarcely perceptible response.

Their glances came closer and closer to subtle meanings, secret understandings.

He caught himself nodding very slightly toward her when both applauded a snatch of rhythm that had caught their mutual fancy. . . .

What was he doing? He was not

drunk. He could stand three times as much without even showing the effects.

And yet he had suddenly gone a-tremble all over! . . . The physical pink and white of that girl, the vague courtesanisms of her eyes—they were shaking him as they might an ingenuous, adolescent boy.

He couldn't help thinking of his wife and being conscience-smitten. . . .

He hastened to pay his bill, tipping the waiter well, and stepped out into the open night again.

But as he rose he avoided the inquisitive eyes of the girl whose speculative attention he had by this time fully drawn toward himself. . . .

He walked along as briskly as before. . . .

But now he had forgotten both wife and business cares. The care-free casual days of his bachelorhood shuffled through his imagination in a continuous streaming of colors, lights, fragrances, and soft, remote voices of forgotten women. . . .

V

THE elevator boy gave him a polite look of surprise as he rode up. . . . This was the boy on night duty, and he had never seen Murray come in so late before without his wife on his arm.

As he got to the door of his apartment, a feeling of shame, which he considered absurd, took him . . . a flush went in waves over his neck and face.

He halted, standing still a moment before inserting the key . . . the straying of his mind heaped upon him all the feeling of guilt that comes of the accomplished act.

"My apartment . . . my wife," his heart seemed to drum for him.

Elsie was sitting calmly by the red-trimmed center-lamp, reading . . . still in her flowered dressing-gown . . . but not with the appearance of having worn it all day. . . . It was now neatly arranged . . . and its brocade of flowers, interspersed with queer Japanese flying birds, overlapped and intermingled,

half-flower, half-bird, in bizarre but orderly fashion. . . .

Murray stepped forward sturdily to conceal the flutter of masculine fright in his breast . . . for he thought that an emotional outburst of some sort was due. . . . Conventionally, one would expect that.

There she was, waiting. It was the first time she had waited up for him.

He studied her with the swift mental processes which a poignant situation creates . . . a sense of alienation, of vague resentment, possessed him . . . just as if she were doing something injurious to him by sitting there so placidly. . . .

Elsie looked beautiful . . . pale. . . .

Dark circles of sleeplessness and nervous tension showing under her eyes, made them more richly and languorously brown. . . .

As she sat there, he perceived in her a fullness of still, rich beauty which she had never possessed before . . . she seemed no longer girlish, but womanly . . . he was surprised to find these qualities in here . . . it was the first time he had ever noticed them . . . and it both pleased and irritated him.

Truly masculine, he wanted always that Feminine Impossible, the Wave poised forever in the breaking—crested forever with volatile, windy silver mists and floating tissue of gold. . . .

VI

ELSIE rose quietly . . . laid the book aside . . . came across the room to him. . . .

"Why did you stay up so late?"

"I couldn't sleep . . . so I waited till you came home," she answered sweetly, nothing of unmelodious reproach in her voice. . . .

He was taken a-back . . . his spiritual unfaithfulness, his salacities of retrospection hurt him. He considered again that the only thing that could wipe them out was a conventional disagreement between himself and his wife.

And he felt a tightening, a solidify-

ing within himself . . . a capricious determination to find fault anyhow. His nervous irritation heightened and tightened, to match the deepening of her unwanted placidity.

Why was she not light, capricious, moody, sullen, angry—anything but wifely?

There was an unconscious air of all-absorbing possession about her—and when by a few sure, unhesitating steps, she came against him, to nestle the dropping of her head beneath his shoulder, it roused him to a blind desire to push her roughly away . . . to take his hat, then, and go out into the night again . . . among strangers. . . .

But he crushed down both impulses.

He groped for justification, prying for some flaw that might give him vent for his inner agitation and disquiet. . . .

If she would only grow perceptibly nervous, in response to his mood, he might regard *that* as sufficient. . . .

"You look worried . . . what has gone wrong, dear?"

"Nothing!"

"Put your arms around me . . ."

He put them around her mechanically, as one obeys under hypnosis. . . .

Having, by superb instinct, got him thus far, she determined to break down this strange mood of his that presented nothing but hard surfaces.

She determined to overcome the whims, the quick, puzzling alterations of a man's behavior toward the woman he loves—much more stupefying and bewildering than any feminine shift of emotion.

Instantaneously she changed from her calm and vast quietudes—not into quick girlish hysteria—that had gone forever—but into a woman's adroitness and battling quickness . . . a mood that touches upon ferocity . . . only that it comes of love . . . or of a love so intense as almost to be enmity.

She now flung herself at him in every possible way. She gave up everything . . . demeaned herself . . . did not chide . . . took on a hundred humblenesses of spirit.

His stubbornness began to crumble and break . . . but still his pride held on frantically.

He clutched himself into clearness of self-possession. He resolved not to let her awake his emotions. He would have it out with her, right now. . . .

"We will have to begin all over again, dear!" His voice came from somewhere outside himself. . . .

"Hush . . . don't talk . . . I want only you . . . now." . . .

"My God . . . we've got to live!"

"Hush," soothed the caressing, imploring voice. . . .

He let himself go. . . .

VII

As they sat opposite each other at the breakfast table, there was a rosi-ness in his wife's face that he had not observed there since their first morning at breakfast together.

And to her, his face looked as handsome, its features as clearly defined and lean as they had been when they were chiselled clean by the cruel uncertainties of love.

"This is one of Richard's handsome days," she thought. . . .

The clash and conflict of the emotions brought into play by the readjustment, their final flowing and blending together in a single tide, had miraculously restored their love to its pristine glow and blossom.

They smiled into each other's eyes. . . .

Then, like a wooer who can wait no longer, he got up so hastily that he spilled his cup of coffee over the tablecloth. It spread rapidly in a constantly widening brown splotch and began a steady drip-drip to the floor. . . .

He went around the table . . . silently and passionately Elsie turned her face up to him . . . their mouths fixed in a long kiss while he clasped her upreached hand. . . .

Then he rang the bell to have the servant come in and clean up the spilled coffee. . . .

THE HERO IN PINK

A GREEK TRAGEDY

By Orrick Johns

SCENE: *Any drawing-room. The ladies, Mary, a young girl, and Mehitabel, her mother, are just sitting down to tea, when Raoul, a good-looking young chap, rushes in.*

RAOUL:

(Shouting frantically.)

Good God, Mary, have you seen your father?

MARY:

No, why?

MEHITABEL:

What's he up to now?

RAOUL:

Up to? Why did you let him leave the house? It's awful!

BOTH LADIES:

But what is the matter, Raoul?

RAOUL:

The matter!

(He sinks into a chair and speaks in a dull and tragic tone.)

The matter is that he is walking along the avenue without any more clothes on than I have on the palm of my hand.

MEHITABEL:

(Fainting.)

This is Nietzsche!

MARY:

(Catches her mother.)

Why didn't you stop him!

RAOUL:

How could I? I stopped the machine and implored him to get in, but he refused imperiously. He said he was go-

ing to the park to address the people, and that the old gods were back with us. He said, "Why have I exercised regularly every day for years and years only to hide my light under a bushel!" Oh, dear! It would have been funny if it hadn't been so awkward!

MARY:

Here, help me with mother.

(They carry her to the couch.)

Now what are we going to do? Why didn't you use force?

RAOUL:

Impossible! I couldn't have budged him. Besides—I—was embarrassed. Do you think I wanted to be seen with him? Oh, I shouldn't mind but it has spoiled our pic, Mary. I'll never be allowed to marry into your family now.

MARY:

I don't care if it has. I'm vexed with you, Raoul. Poor Father, his figure is his ruin!

(She goes toward the door.)

What's that noise?

(There is a confused murmur, then a tramping of feet outside, and in a hushed silence four policemen bring in a stretcher upon which lies a rather roundish man of fifty. He is covered with a sheet which is dyed with blood. Mary cries out.)

Oh, what have they done!

A POLICEMAN:

Shot by a citizen, Madam.

(Mary goes to kneel at her father's

side as they bring him to the center of the stage. Mehitabel joins her. Following shortly behind the stretcher are forty beautiful maidens in ordinary afternoon gowns. They are all weeping quietly.)

THE MAN:

(Raising himself on his elbow.)

Well, he got me.

(To the police.)

Here, you guardians of hoary-headed hypocrisy, give me air. Give me room to die in.

(The police move away. The forty beautiful maidens kneel in a circle round the bier.)

So, they have covered my nakedness after all. Cowards. Off with that sheet!

(He tries to throw it from him, but Mehitabel prevents him.)

Ah, I gave them thoughts to ponder upon. I moved them! They swayed like a branch. I stood upon a high place and told them the message of beauty. I made them ashamed of their shame. They will not forget me. Girls, you heard me—you understood me!

(A prolonged murmur of assent.)

You would have followed me!

(Another murmur.)

None dared to touch me while I spoke. But when I had ceased, the slim idiot fired. He has destroyed this temple, but this spirit shall live.

(The maidens murmur.)

MEHITABEL:

Oh, my poor husband, would you have your daughter or me do as you have done?

THE MAN:

(Looking at her sadly, with a searching and compassionate gaze.)

No, Mehitabel, not you . . .

(He sinks back, turns his face toward

the forty beautiful maidens, and speaks with a last effort.)

Good-by, my friends. Remember my sacrifice!

(The forty beautiful maidens chant the following lines, one after the other, each taking a line):

He was my dream of a man,
I could have died for him,
Oh, Lord Apollo,
Do not forget thy handmaiden,
He was like a star,
Like a giant tree,
Like a fleece-bearing wave,
Would I might follow him in death . . .
There were songs in his voice,
Shame left me when I beheld him,
I heard the voice of children,
A god spoke,
My eyes were blinded with beauty,
I felt as though I stood upon a rock,
A mighty wind passed over me,
My soul was in his hand,
My prayers shall restore him,
The world of men seemed as insects to me,

I am sworn a maiden forever,
His way shall be my way,
Others will rise like him,
His truth shall spread over the Earth,
His words shall be mighty,
It was for us that he died,
Yea, he was the god of women,
Let us sculpt him in bronze,
And place his effigy in a temple,
Let us remember his name in song,
Because of him I shall never grow old,
Nor my beauty desert me . . .

Lord Apollo,
Mighty in life,
Peerless still in death,
Dreamer eternal,
Martyr for purity,
Lover too perfect,
We bow down in sorrow,
We mourn thy fall.

CURTAIN.



YOUTH AND A MONTH

By Harold de Polo

AS he entered the lobby, Mrs. Tremerton quickly smothered the little smile that had come to her lips and eyes. She looked at him with a languid quizzicalness. Yes, the inevitable change was there—an added sparkle to the eyes, a high flush to the cheeks, a more elastic spring to the walk—and the cravat he wore, she immediately noticed, was *not* black. Instead, it blazed forth in a soft combination of stripes that were nevertheless a bit giddy. This, considering her former insistence in his donning a plain one, rather assured her of the fact that she had not judged wrongly. Previously, too, this had seemed to delight him immensely—her scrupulous care in persisting on a colour to be worn, a certain cut to a coat, a particular last to a boot. Not that she cared, you know—but it's always deadly effective with the male!

He was beside her now, his hand outstretched, his head and shoulders inclined to a nicety; even though he was a bit theatrical:

"Dear girl—dear girl. It's perfectly bully to see you again," he drawled, with that superior air youth loves to use against an older woman.

Mrs. Tremerton felt like smiling; but didn't. Formerly, he had always met her with soft words, tensely impassioned, and highly exaggerated phrases of undying love and devotion. It was interesting and the luncheon would be worth while.

However, her expressive face saddened wistfully and her wide eyes of violet became a trifle moist. She smiled at him with tender wanness, her tones low:

"You—you weren't always so distant

and punctilious, Roy. You used to be so nice and sweet and loving and— . . . and I'm afraid that you've fallen in love with somebody else while I've been away. I—I just know that you have!"

He reddened, stuttered, grappled for words, his perfect poise gone so soon that it was rather ludicrous:

"I—the lobby—so public—I— . . . I—don't be foolish, dear—and shall we go in and have lunch?"

"You do love me as much as ever then, Roy, don't you?"

"More—more'n ever," he whispered thickly, taking her arm and piloting her through the marble columns and into the dining room.

Once at the table, and the order given, he got back some of his ease—for a couple of Manhattans are about the best nerve-straightener—perhaps only temporarily, if you will—that I know of.

He called for his superior manner and found it, smiling across at her with what was supposed to be a bored lifting of his brows:

"Yes, it's bully to see you—simply wonderfully bully. Jove, but I've missed you—missed you as I thought no man ever could miss any woman. The long days, the long nights. Mostly the nights—how black and drear and utterly hopeless they seemed, thinking of the times I'd sat around with you at some cosy table and talked and talked. They—they were perfectly ghastly!"

He paused, sighed—and then spoke with an eager look in his eyes:

"Did you miss *me*— . . . horribly?"

She smiled softly, leaning further over: "Dreadfully, Roy—*dreadfully*!"

... But just think how happy we'll be now. This afternoon at the matinee, this evening at dinner, later a spin in the motor, a bit of trotting—and then until the morning before we see each other again. Won't it be heavenly?"

He tried to look awfully enamoured and joyous.

"Yes—yes. Abso-lute-ly heavenly! ... But—but say, isn't this mayonnaise abominable? Quite ruins the artichoke!"

"Roy, you've forgotten that I always like artichokes cold and with a vinaigrette dressing! ... But don't let's speak of that. I'm sure you'll get back into remembering the little things I prefer. Just think of the golden days stretched ahead of us, always together, no one interfering—won't it be lovely? ... Oh. What did you say you had tickets for?"

This time he positively crimsoned as he averted his eyes:

She looked at him with her big eyes.

"Oh, I'm horribly sorry—horribly sorry! Lord! I did forget about the artichoke. Shall I send it back? Is there anything else you want? Are you quite sure the sauterne is right? Don't you agree that endive was a wise selection?"

He completely ignored the theatre tickets, and an infinitesimal sigh of relief came from his lips as he saw that she, too, had apparently forgotten about them and gone on to other things.

"Yes," she smiled, "you did forget. And don't send them back. And there's nothing else I want. And I'm quite sure the wine is right. And I do agree about the endive! ... But listen, Roy. Do tell me how much you've missed me and how you passed the dreary month. Did—did you see other women—other girls?"

He essayed to look immensely offended.

"You know that I love only you!"

"Do you? ... But tell me, have you seen much of the Armisteds since I've been away?"

She knew that she was kind in giv-

ing him this chance—and he met it with the fierce welcome she knew he would. Immediately and quite rapidly, he started in on a lengthy, rambling account of the people he'd seen. He told of dinners, of luncheons, of teas, of theater parties, of tête-à-têtes, of trots, all in such minute detail that it was really amusing. He clung to the subject, fostered it, as if fearing that what might come later would surely be dangerous. Occasionally, too, his eye strayed to the clock. Soon, however, he ran to the end of his string and stared wildly about the room in search of some new and harmless topic.

At last he found it. A few tables away, flapperishly and maybe a bit noticeably gowned, was a youngish woman with a bright face that cried out vitality—though perhaps it was so well rouged and black-sticked that he didn't notice.

"I say. She's—she's not bad, you know. Rather stunning, I call her!"

Mrs. Tremerton smiled—most amicably. Nevertheless, had he been a bit more keen he would have noticed the amusement in her eyes. Her own hair was black—jet black—and he had always fervently protested that if there was *one* thing he *detested* it was a blonde. Blondes? It was quite beyond his comprehension—or had been—how any man could even sit with one over a table!

"She is rather neat," she purred sweetly. "Don't you think, though, that she looks too young and flapper-like?"

The answer came as she had expected.

"Young—yes," he defended frowningly, "but I don't think it's any great harm to look that way, as you imply. She—she seems—oh, sort of vivacious, if you know what I mean. Sort of laughing and jolly and happy and innocent and—and young! That's it—youth! Sometimes, you know, in blondes, youth goes finely. In—in blondes, of course! ... Now—now your type—your dark, inimitable type—it's—it's different, if you know what I mean! That innocent and gay young

stuff wouldn't go right. I—I like you the way you are—just the way you are! . . . But—but *she's* different!"

"She is nice, isn't she?" agreed Mrs. Tremerton, pleasantly and inanely, but quite satisfactorily enough for the boy.

He warmed to the subject, his face glowing.

"Yes; and I rather fancy her eyes, too, do you know? . . . Sort of like the clear-sky, all speckless blue and unsmirched white and unfathomably deep. There's fun there, too—fun and mischief and youth and the joy of sheer living—if you know what I mean?"

Decidedly the luncheon was amusing; and, although the last topic had endless possibilities, the clock was ticking away and Mrs. Tremerton let the business pass.

"Oh, Roy. What *did* you say those tickets were for?"

Another flush; another wild glance at the clock; another averting of the head—and another silence that was to him maddening. . . . Then, his eyes almost literally glued to the clock as if imploring it to hasten on to where he wanted it, he suddenly broke out with what was intended to be a pleasant laugh.

"Say—say. I—no, by George—I *didn't* tell you that I met Vernham today—the chap who was giving you such a rush last year, remember? . . . Yes, asked quite eagerly when you were coming back and how he wanted to see you and all that. Funny, eh—funny? . . . Listen, remember the time when he saw us together at the theater and came over and— . . ."

Again he went into a lengthy, ambiguous and reminiscent chatter. His eyes, all the while, never glanced at her face—for they were gazing desperately at the clock. His cheeks were crimson—a crimson that was quickly going over his entire face. He was fighting for time—fighting gamely and hard and very crudely. And at last, while the woman sat there taking it all in with an amused little smile of irony which he did not see, an obsequious waiter softly stepped forward and informed him that he was wanted on the tele-

phone on some exceedingly important business matter!

Mrs. Tremerton, to this day, vows that she has never seen—or never expects to see—such a look of blissful relief as came over the boy's face at that moment. He half rose, trembling, whitening, reddening, and mumbled out some sort of an apology for having to quit the table for an instant.

Mrs. Tremerton, however, very firmly put out her hand on his coat sleeve. Her face, now, showed a bit of the more than thirty years of shrewd wisdom that she had lived. It was a trifle hard, a trifle ironic, a trifle amused. She spoke very quietly, yet very decidedly.

"Sit down!"

He stuttered and gasped:

"Yes. But—but I've got to answer this call. Business, you know—most important—"

She shook her head slowly, eyeing him with lazy, good-natured rebuke.

"No. It really isn't necessary. Listen. Please sit down and allow me to tell you what will please you just as much as the answering of that mock call, sent in by you, would have!"

Weakly he obeyed. He stared at her, almost in fear.

"Roy," she said quietly, evenly, "I've been away a month—and I know well what youth and a month mean. Before I left, we carried on a bit of a strenuous flirtation—at least, I allowed you to make violent love to me until you almost believed it yourself. While I've been away, however, you've found yourself and *truly* fallen in love. The girl is about twenty—maybe younger; she has light hair—natural light hair; she has big blue eyes—eyes with fun and mischief and sparkle in them; she adores you and lets you know it—but she's nevertheless a jolly little person who perhaps likes to tease you. And, oh—I might as well mention that she likes dazzling colours and mayonnaise sauce. This afternoon, being Wednesday, you were to take her to the matinee—for you've been in the habit of doing it lately. Only, my dear boy,

why didn't you drop me a line about it in answer to mine to you and come out plainly and tell me the truth? Really don't you think you've been foolish?"

She paused and smiled at him, very honestly and very sweetly.

More gasping; more stuttering; more reddening; more silence. Finally he got out his words:

"I—I— . . . Good God—*how did you know?*"

She laughed lightly.

"Dear boy. Any woman would have known!"

He was quiet for a time. Then, his face and eyes lighting up, he leaned forward.

"But—but say; she's bully—simply bully—Phyllis is! You want to meet her—you'll like her and she'll like you. Why, if you could just see the cute way she—"

He stopped suddenly, flushing, as he apparently thought of another side to the thing:

"But say, this isn't nice to be telling you this. I—I—I'm awfully sorry if you're disappointed—I'm awfully sorry

if you—you— . . . I—I couldn't help it, though—I—"

She cut in with a ripple:

"Roy, don't you think I know exactly what would happen to youth in a month? I knew it so well, child, that I have someone meeting me here for the *matinée*. We're seeing Molnar, by the way—and you're seeing musical comedy, are you not?"

"Ye—yes—The Lady in Cerise! How did you— . . . But—but say,"—he frowned, and meant what he said,—*"don't you think it was rather a mean trick to deliberately make an engagement with someone else before you knew that I wasn't going to—"*

Mrs. Tremerton didn't let him finish. She laughed, now, a bit louder than she should have—she knew it and couldn't help it. She rose.

She sighed, for the thing was hopeless.

"Yes, it *was* mean—I'll agree to anything! . . . But hurry and settle the check. I'm keeping the poor man waiting and I don't want to be late for the first act!"



THE WAITER

By Madison Kay

BONE, solid bone, is the head of the waiter, thick and unyielding as slopes of Olympus, housing a void that is silent and endless, doomed now to darkness forever and aye.

Feeling in heart that he offers thee service, grips he thy chair as thou fain would sit down, pushes it forcibly, crushing thy bosom twixt thy own back-bone and top of the table. Thus having showed thee his godly intentions, gets he thy water and brings it to thee, thrusting three fingers far into the liquid, giving—how true—a Hungarian flavor. Then as thou tryest to murmur thy sweetest into the ear of the maiden thou lovest stands he behind thee and fondles his napkin, shooting stray insects deep into thy collar.

Bone, solid bone, is the head of the waiter, thick and unyielding as slopes of Olympus, housing a void that is silent and endless, doomed now to darkness forever and aye.



THE MONOPOLIST

By Louise Winter

HE had been killed instantly, and his mother tried to take comfort from that.

"At least he did not suffer," she said, her eyes strangely dry, her voice marvelously controlled. "And it would have been worse—for him—had he lived, maimed and a cripple."

Tad Kennedy had been in his senior year at Yale. That night he had been joy riding, and his companion, a girl, had made her escape before anyone had a chance to learn who she was. Tad's classmates were singularly reticent. No one wanted to be sure of the girl's identity. She might have been one of half a dozen, they averred, but when Mrs. Kennedy's lawyer sought out the six girls whose names were given to him, they all succeeded in establishing alibis.

At that time not one of them knew why she was wanted. Later, when the truth came out, three tried to retract their earlier denials, but then it was too late.

At last one of Tad's chums offered a clue. "I hate to get a girl in trouble, and as far as we know, Dell is a good girl, but if you'll give me your word no harm will come to her, I'll tell you where you can find her."

The lawyer promised. "Mrs. Kennedy wants to do something for the girl with whom Tad spent his last hours."

The boy breathed a little sigh of relief. "All right. I think you'll find the girl to be Dell Painter. Her uncle keeps a shop of some kind." Then he gave the address.

The lawyer had some difficulty in seeing Dell. Old Painter tried to pro-

tect his niece. "Dell's a good girl," he said, "and she's been punished more'n she deserves. She did go round a bit with young Kennedy, but I liked the boy myself. There didn't seem to be no harm in him."

The lawyer agreed. There had been no harm in Tad, merely thoughtlessness and youth. "It's the boy's mother," he said. "She'd like to see Miss Painter and talk with her about Tad. She's a rich woman and he was her only child. Sorrow will perhaps make her generous." Next day he saw Dell. She was undoubtedly pretty, in a pink-and-white fashion, but her experience had stamped her face with terror, and she sat in a corner of the little room back of the shop, clasping and unclasping her thin little hands, and scarcely able to speak. At first she repulsed the suggestion to meet Tad's mother. "Oh, I couldn't! I couldn't!" she cried.

But the lawyer was patient, and finally he hit upon the right appeal with her, as he had with her uncle.

When he carried his news to Mrs. Kennedy she questioned him closely.

"You say she seems like a nice girl?"

"Yes, in a common way. She has a public school education, a veneer gleaned from association with the college boys, but no mind above the moving picture shows."

Mrs. Kennedy frowned. And this was the girl Tad had—!

"She considers she was engaged to Tad?"

"He called her his girl. There's no doubt he was fond of her. She has a ring that he gave her, inscribed with their initials and a date, and he claimed the exclusive right to her society."

Mrs. Kennedy nodded. "I'll see her. My plan is, if she's at all possible, to take her into my home, to make up to her for the wrong she suffered at my son's hands."

"But she doesn't consider that she suffered any wrong. And besides, if it hadn't been Tad, it would have been someone else."

"But it *was* Tad," said Tad's mother, with an air of finality.

She insisted upon seeing Dell alone, and no one knew what passed between them at the meeting. But when she returned to New York, Dell accompanied her.

Dell was seventeen and malleable, and Mrs. Kennedy was a woman of tremendous force. She moulded the girl along lines to her liking, and Dell submitted silently. But like all weak creatures, she had a secretive strain. Tad's mother soon realized that she could never penetrate to the girl's heart, and discover the real tie which had existed between Dell and her son.

Dell insisted that she and Tad had been "keeping company," and the ring verified her allegation. As for the date, it commemorated, she said, the first time he had told her that he loved her.

"And you expected to marry him?" Mrs. Kennedy tried to be gentle.

Dell hung her head, then suddenly she raised it, defiantly. "I hoped to. He was very fond of me."

"I don't doubt it." But Tad's mother felt the baffling wall which the girl had erected around the secret of her precise relations to Tad.

The first year was spent in education, until the surface veneer of the girl was quite complete. As for her mind, the lawyer had been correct. It could not rise above the movies. However, most people meeting her, with her wistful face, only saw that her eyes were a heavenly shade of blue, her hair a brown that not long since had been golden, and her mouth as sweet and petulant as a child's. Her voice had taken on a deeper tone, and her small white hands had learned to busy themselves gracefully in a dozen different

tasks. They were especially effective doing embroidery.

The lawyer, who was also a family friend, ventured one day to question Tad's mother.

"And when you've finished making her over, what are you going to do with her?" he asked.

"I'm going to marry her to some man who will appreciate her. It will have to be an older man in solid circumstances. She's a splendid little housekeeper; her tastes run to domesticity on a small scale. I've given her a smattering of the necessary accomplishments. As you see, she's learned to carry herself with a certain grace; and to subdue her natural tendency to talk through her nose. Moreover, she is pretty; she's the type that appeals to most men."

"Marriage?" said the lawyer thoughtfully. "But won't the man she marries have to be told?"

"What?" Tad's mother surveyed her questioner calmly.

"You said that you wished to make up to her for all she had suffered at Tad's hands."

"And you said that she did not consider my boy had wronged her."

Defiance blazed from the mother's eyes. The lawyer discreetly admitted that he had been worsted in the argument. He commenced to watch Dell.

Soon it was the beginning of her second year under Mrs. Kennedy's tutelage. The household had been moved from the city to the Kennedy country home on the Sound.

It was a neighborly colony, and the younger set began to include Dell in tennis parties, dinner dances and motor trips. They knew her history, but they took it for granted that she was now Mrs. Kennedy's adopted daughter.

The first verbal invitation, which came over the telephone, sent a somewhat startled flush to the girl's cheeks.

"What shall I say?" she asked.

Mrs. Kennedy looked up from her book. "Would you like to go?" The invitation was to motor to a nearby country club for a garden fête.

"I should love it, but—"

"Then there's no reason why you shouldn't accept. It's about time for you to begin to go around."

Dell felt that this was an evasion of the real issue, but she said no more. She went to the garden fête, and she was decidedly a success. Mothers and fathers began to argue that Mrs. Kennedy would surely not have taken her son's mistress into her home.

Presently Mrs. Kennedy became conscious that Dell was the recipient of more than ordinary attention from the younger brother of their nearest neighbor. Clifford Trent was thirty-five. He had been married and widowed, and now he was beginning to emerge from a year's enforced seclusion. Dell attracted him. Her demure ways and fresh loveliness were making a solid impression upon his heart.

One afternoon, when Dell had motored to a tennis tournament, Trent dropped in to see Mrs. Kennedy.

"It's rather embarrassing, and yet—hang it all!—I had to come to you, Mrs. Kennedy, before I spoke to Dell. It's a peculiar situation, but I'll handle it as delicately as I can. Shall I ask Dell to marry me?"

He was decidedly uncomfortable, for he knew that his hostess understood all that he left unsaid.

Mrs. Kennedy's hands lay at rest in her lap. This was what she had planned for, ever since the day she had heard of Dell. To marry her to a good man, who would take care of her, so that she would no longer stand between mother and son! Thus she would be effaced, and Tad's memory would belong to his mother alone.

But there was no hint of triumph in her quiet voice as she asked: "Do you love her?"

"Yes, but that is beside the question. I have to be sure on one point. You haven't acted out of mistaken motives, have you?"

"Dell considered that she was engaged to my son."

"Did they ask your sanction?"

"They were both so young. They

considered love first. It was his first love as well as hers."

Trent pulled thoughtfully at his mustache. "First love is apt to contain more sentiment than passion," he ventured, discreetly feeling his way.

Mrs. Kennedy felt that she could agree with this premise. "Yes," she said.

"And they were engaged to be married?"

"He had given her a ring."

"And you would have given your consent, eventually?"

"Frankly no. I would have done all in my power to break it off." Not even to gain her purpose would she lie, deliberately.

"Because she wasn't good enough for your son?"

She began to justify herself. "A mother is foolishly fond. He was my only son, and I aimed high for him."

"But other mothers! Aren't you setting a snare for their sons, by allowing them to meet Dell?" He spoke sternly.

But Mrs. Kennedy shook her head. "Dell to-day is very different to what she was eighteen months ago. Had the affair gone on, *sub rosa*, as it would have done, it might have been too late when Dell came under my notice. I took her at the psychological moment. She was soft and pliant, and she is now a fair presentment of a well-born, well-bred girl. She has no rough edges, and she will make the man she marries an excellent wife. Preferably, he must be an older man, for Dell, in spite of the fact that she is just nineteen, has poise that lifts her out of the very young class. She has learned through suffering. When the accident occurred, as you may have read, she was pinned under the car. She knew my son was dead, and it was nearly an hour before help came. The marks of that experience will never be entirely effaced from her consciousness."

Trent fidgeted uneasily in his chair. "Suffering does purge the soul, but I'd prefer it was not necessary to purge my wife's soul of anything," he said diffidently.

"Even a girl has memories."

"Girlish memories."

"I have not said that Dell's were more."

"You have her confidence?"

Mrs. Kennedy conquered a second temptation to lie. "No."

The answer surprised Trent into plain speech. "Then you're not sure there wasn't something between her and your son?"

"There was love between them."

"Ah!" It was almost a sneer.

"Young love." She fought on blindly, trying to turn defeat into victory.

Trent rose. He was quite pale. It was a nasty situation, but he saw no other way out of it. "Thank you," he said, "for being honest with me."

"And you don't love her?"

"Not enough for that."

"But I haven't admitted anything. As far as I know—and I am Tad's mother—she is in all respects worthy to be your wife."

The man hesitated. He dreaded ridicule; he hated the idea of being taken in, but the girl was very lovely. If he could only be sure.

"I do love her," he said, "and if you have her interests at heart, will you do this for me? Will you sound her? You are a smart woman; you will know how much to say, how much to leave unsaid. I put myself in your hands."

"It is a responsibility." It was more, but he did not know that.

"Will you accept it?"

She hesitated a moment. After all, it would be a satisfaction to herself to know. "Yes," she said, finally.

Trent took his departure, curiously relieved to feel that his interests were in such capable hands. He would abide by her report. He knew she would be honest with him.

Mrs. Kennedy waited impatiently for Dell to return. It seemed as if the girl were lingering purposely to annoy her. She telephoned to the garage, and learned that Roberts, her English chauffeur, had gone after Miss Painter, nearly an hour ago. She thought of

telephoning to the country club but decided against it.

She sat out on the piazza and waited, her face toward the Sound, her eyes turned inward to memories of her son! Tad, as a baby, pressed close to her breast—Tad, as a little boy, his head shorn of its beautiful curls—Tad, after his first fight, with blood streaming from a cut above one brown eye—Tad, off to college, their first real separation. And then, in the midst of her pride, the tragic end. Her misery from the first had been overshadowed by the thought of the girl. Dell stood as a barrier to perfect communion between the spirits of mother and son. And to annihilate the girl, to drown her in a sea of commonplaces, to remove her absolutely from any share in memories of Tad, this had been Mrs. Kennedy's idea from the beginning. She had planned to break the last earthly link that united her boy to anyone but herself; she coveted the post of sole worshipper of his memory. And now that she had almost attained her object, weak hands held a veil which must be torn aside before she could reach fulfillment.

Dell, as Clifford Trent's wife, would be swept so far from her orbit that shortly she would be able to forget that the girl had ever existed.

She went over in her mind what she should say to Dell. She must not frighten her, at least until she had won her confidence. Later, of course, she might even descend to threats to drive her into Trent's arms. As for Trent, he could be won over, even if the worst were true. Mrs. Kennedy dismissed him contemptuously.

When the car drove up, Dell was sitting in front with Roberts, and her laugh rung out as they swung under the *porte-cochère*. The laugh jarred on Mrs. Kennedy's ears. It was the only common touch that she had been unable to eradicate.

Dell ran up the steps, and catching sight of the figure of her benefactress, she came around in front instead of going directly into the house.

Contrary to her custom, she spoke first, and her manner was animated. "I drove the car all the way home. It was fine," she said, and there was an unwonted flush to her cheeks, an unusual sparkle in her eyes.

"So Roberts is teaching you to drive."

"Yes, and I love it!" The girl sat down, and began to take off her gloves.

Presently Mrs. Kennedy led the conversation to the inordinately delicate subject that filled her mind. "Mr. Trent was here this afternoon. He seems very fond of you, Dell, and of course I want you to be happy. No morbid regrets, you understand? What you and Tad were to each other belongs to the past. You are very young and you have your life to live. It is my intention to settle fifty thousand dollars on you when you marry, provided your choice meets with my approval. You seem to like Mr. Trent, and there's no reason, is there, why I should refuse to consent to his trying to win you?"

Mrs. Kennedy managed to keep her voice level. She was hovering on the edge of a secret that had baffled her for eighteen months. What would she learn when the veil was thrown aside?

Dell's face lost its color, and the blue eyes took on a piteous, hunted look. "Mr. Trent! Oh, I couldn't! It wouldn't be right!" and her voice trembled.

Mrs. Kennedy leaned forward and seized one of the little white hands in a strong grasp. "Why wouldn't it be right? Do you mean on account of what you were to Tad?"

For a moment the truth hung between them, delicately poised. Then Dell suddenly collapsed.

"Yes," she whispered. "He's a gentleman, and he'd have to know."

"But if he knew and forgave?" The mother was pitiless.

"Oh, I couldn't! It wouldn't be right!" Again the futile wail of the weaker woman.

"You think Tad would exact fidelity?"

The girl stared, then she burst into tears. Mrs. Kennedy released her, and got up and went into the house. Inwardly she raged. Her plans had come to naught. The girl was obstinate as well as weak. But she *knew*. Dell had been Tad's mistress. That point had been cleared up.

Dell sent word that she could not come down to dinner. She had a headache. Mrs. Kennedy sent up some toast and tea, but she left the girl alone. She did not feel equal to the interview which must soon take place.

In the morning, when she arose at her usual hour, she saw a note lying on the carpet in front of her door. Evidently it had been pushed under from the outside. She picked it up and turned it over. It was addressed to her in Dell's immature hand.

"Dear Mrs. Kennedy," she read: "I know you're going to think me ungrateful, but truly I'm not. I appreciate what you tried to do for me, but it wasn't much use. I couldn't marry Mr. Trent, not because I was Tad's girl, but because I'm going to marry Clem Roberts in the morning. We've been trying to get courage to tell you, but we were both afraid. Clem's brother owns a garage in New York, and he's going to take Clem in, so we'll be fixed all right. Perhaps you think I'm marrying beneath me, but I'm not. I wouldn't have suited Mr. Trent. I couldn't have lived up to him. I couldn't have lived up to Tad either, even if he had married me. He wanted to once, but I wouldn't let him. You see, I lived in a college town and I knew how such marriages turned out. If you should want to make me a little present, I'd take it thankfully, though of course I wouldn't expect what you said this afternoon, for I suppose you can't approve of Clem, steady as he is. Good-bye and thank you for giving me so many pretty things. May I keep them?" And then, "Yours truly, Della Painter."

A curious feeling of lightness stole over Mrs. Kennedy. She felt as if a

weight which had been fastened to her shoulders had suddenly slipped off. She straightened up and a little smile played about the corners of her lips. At last, not in the way she had planned, but in one a hundred times more effective,

the link binding Tad to this girl was broken, and by Dell's own hand. She had had no part in this.

Fifty thousand! It was a small sum to pay for the sole right to her son's memory!



LE CHEVALIER RIA NT

By Seumas Le Chat

TO-DAY my soul is drowning in your eyes:
Love me To-day.

—To-morrow let us smile our vows to lies
And mock the pallid ghost of love away.

To-day your snow-frail hand may crush my heart:
Ask then no more;

To-morrow let us laugh our lives apart
And seek new shrines wherein each may adore.

To-day lives in your kisses golden pain:

Strive not to bind
The butterfly To-morrow with the chain
The phantom hours have tristfully entwined.

Sweetest To-day our passion's flame traps up
In ecstasy

To-morrow, with your lips for stirrup-cup,
Ere I depart I'll pledge in constancy.



THE great obstacle to happiness in marriage is to expect too much. The wise woman selects her detective and her trousseau at the same time.



TO get on in society a man must be willing to be taught many things he already knows—by people who do not know them.

HOLY MATRIMONY

By Lilith Benda

IN the midst of the riotous gayety of one of those stealthily conducted banquets which cause the head waiters of smart hostleries to regard somewhat knowingly, albeit respectfully, impeccable plutocrats and towering pillars of the state when they enter with wives or daughters, John Perry, enjoying it all for the first time, leaned back in contentment. John Perry was well pleased with the world. Two years ago an unknown barrister, the "men higher up," corporation heads in his case, had quickly summed up at its value his stable unscrupulousness, that salient trait of the successful business man which enables him compunctionlessly to interpret honor in terms of plausible probity, and always to justify any end by adroitly conceived means. His quick, nervous energy, too, manifesting itself in speedy, brilliant work, coupled with a smooth discretion and suavity of manner, had compelled unwilling financiers to consider him, first as an excellent servant whom one treated politely and occasionally took to lunch, then as a man to be feared, whom one asked to one's wife's least exclusive dances, and finally as one to be taken into the circle of the elect, to be put up at the best clubs, to be included in dinner lists, and, especially, to be admitted to Lucullan repasts such as this one, sporadic outbreaks from domestic trammels which, held in inaccessible private dining-rooms, with vintage wines, and the youngest and prettiest baggages in profusion, change the cold glitter in crafty magnates' eyes to a glow of generous gullibility, and the glow in innocent orbs to the cold, crafty glitter of plutomania.

Only that afternoon, too, Perry had

called upon a Mrs. Rose Page, a very young widow of affluence, social position and looks—red-haired, dimpled and daintily formed, who, he felt, would meet his every exacting requirement as a wife, and who looked at him with eager, alluring eyes. In the intimacy of her little grey and silver salon, with Killarney roses everywhere in abundance, only the fact that their acquaintance had been but brief restrained him from clinching the situation then and there. And now, at this function beyond the social pale, not only did he see, with his acceptance by the moneyed brotherhood, a realization of cherished ambitions, but in the misty invitation of blue, black, and hazel eyes, he could not but read a nice differentiation between himself and the paunchy pachyderms, a flattering tribute to well-knit frame and pleasing countenance which anaesthetized his slight sense of shame at being one with the tipling dodderers. There was a certain Kitty seated beside him, a lithe-limbed, laughing little jade, innamorata of an influential senator who, each time that she pursed her lovely lips to meet the thick, loose ones hovering over her, squeezed Perry's hand. She was the prettiest girl in the room, and her hand was little and soft. So he returned the pressure with interest, and had about determined to cultivate her, when he heard a light tap on his shoulder, and heard a voice whispering in his ear:

"Old darling, don't do it. Don't try to steal the other fellow's girl, at least not at this stage of the game. You're not quite firmly established yet. That senile bald head is pretty well smitten, and he can make or break you, you

know. Wait with those tactics for a couple of years. She's comely—yes—but there are lots of others, and are the best of us worth a smash-up of big plans? At any rate, consider a moment before he catches you squeezing her hand."

He looked up at the girl standing beside him. She was rather nice looking, the big, fair-haired type, a little older than Kitty, however, the flush on her face suggestive of wine and rouge, rather than of Kitty's buoyant youth. A little too ample for the débutante style of dress she affected, also. On her full, red lips, though, there came a smile which pleased him. Her voice was singularly low and well modulated, and he noticed that she had a fine neck and throat.

"I think you're right, at that," he said finally. "Care to dance?"

"Not dancing, thanks." She continued to smile in silence until someone called, "Margaret," when with a nod, she left him. Not particularly interested, he omitted to follow, and would have forgotten her completely but for the timeliness of her advice, and her slow, grave smile.

A few weeks later, though, at another of these surreptitious festivities, Perry, somewhat bored, somewhat preoccupied with the charms of Mrs. Rose Page, happened to turn, and started in surprise at the sight of a beautiful woman, completely out of place among the befluffed little wenches, who bowed, and approached him. There was something regal in her manner, an elegant opulence in her poise. Her fair hair, brushed back from her forehead and coiled high, shone with the subdued glint of some alloy of silver and gold. Her low-cut, black velvet gown revealed a superb figure, and intensified the creaminess of her skin, as one in tint with the single string of pearls she wore. She was examining the contents of a costly hand-bag, a souvenir of the occasion, and, as she came closer, he recognized her full-lipped smile.

"Yes, it's Margaret," she said, seating herself beside him, "Margaret, your

mentor, and the transformation is due to you, young man. I was angry at your indifference the other night, and sat before my mirror when I got home, to determine just where the trouble lay, I saw quickly enough. I'd become too old for ingénue's clothes, that's all. I looked twenty-five dressed up like eighteen. So, then and there, I decided to give up being pretty, and become unusual. They tell me I've succeeded beyond my aim, but, be that as it may, I threw away my rouge, bought a darker eyebrow pencil, slicked my hair back, discarded the Psyche knot for a queenly mass piled high, bought me the Téclas, and had them make me up this dress over at the place—I'm a designer, you know. Now I look twenty-one dressed up like thirty. Incidentally, I'm twenty-six. A wise change, don't you think? Does it please you?"

"Awfully"—he wondered as he looked how, on the previous occasion, he could have failed to notice the vivid, startling blue of her eyes—"but you're another type, now. You'll have to give up these parties. They're enjoyable, and so are you. But you spoil the party, and the party spoils you. It's like fastening an Easter lily on a Christmas tree. You've become an incongruous element here, Margaret."

"I'm afraid so," she sighed, "and it makes me blue. For I'm rather keen about these messy, vulgar parties. I like to dance, and get a bit lit, and all that. Most women do, I believe. That's why there's as much wistfulness as scorn in a respectable housewife's voice when she sneers, 'That woman!' But black velvet and pearls make one feel so confoundedly respectable. One doesn't mind having one's shoulder pinched through flesh-colored tulle, but this damphool velvet grimly expostulates. I find myself sipping champagne slowly—calling it champagne, too, instead of 'wine,' forgetting Broadway jargon, and recalling conversations I used to hear at home."

"At home?" he put in. "My dear girl, you're not going to tell me that you've the stereotyped pedigree? Poor

but worthy parentage? Brought up in a convent? Refined, genteel home atmosphere? Father a minister and all that?"

She laughed. "Fatal though the admission be, I make it—but with a difference. Father and mother weren't genteel, they were charming; not refined, but well bred. I wasn't educated in a convent; I had a governess. And far from being a pastor, my father was a dreadful bounder whose vices I've inherited, Lucifer love him for it. And they died, the dears, leaving me no bank account, but a taste for luxury, an education, a business sense, and a gift for designing frocks at sixty-five dollars a week, all of which, together with the black velvet and pearls, make me feel to-night as if I'd feel awfully insulted at finding this twenty-dollar gold-piece in my souvenir bag, but for the fact that it comes in conveniently for an overdue manicure bill."

She tossed the gold-piece into the air, and caught it. With a sudden impulse, Perry leaned over and took it from her.

"Heads we leave now, tails we stick this party out," he challenged, "is it a go?"

Her eyes lighted. "It's a go."

Despite his clumsy efforts to manipulate the coin, it fell tails. He looked up at her. She was smiling, and her eyes seemed bigger and darker than before.

"I'm a poor gambler," she murmured, "and anyhow, it should have been heads. So come along."

When, head held high, cloak wrapped about her in sumptuous, sovereign folds, she met him in a little hallway outside the dressing-room door, lifting her full lips without a word of preface, she kissed him warmly, unembarrassedly, quite as if it were in the order of things.

And when, a minute later, they stood awaiting his car, still a little uncertain as to how to take her:

"Your address?" he asked.

"Yours?" she whispered back with a tranquil smile.

She proved an altogether charming mistress, beautiful, amiable, ardent, and by no means stupid. Always unruffled, always serene, gradually she became an influence both soothing and stimulating, a tonic and an anodyne. She never asked, "Do you love me?" But, with a soft gleam in her eyes, whether of triumph or of tenderness he could not tell, her smile fading, she would whisper, "You do love me," and shake her head, as if it were an assured fact which made her wonder, and grow a little sad.

In the midst of business affairs, during the first courses of long dinners, he found himself anxious to hurry away and join her. And, as the months went by, he began to find disturbing this insatiable need which pursued him steadily, no matter how firmly he resolved to rid himself of it. At any time, he knew that a summons would bring her to him. Yet, if, urged by his soberer judgment to terminate the affair, he sent no messages for several weeks, no reproaches came from her. Quietly she staid away. But, more loudly with each succeeding day, her picture on his table, her peignoir in his wardrobe, her very spirit imbued in the atmosphere, all cried out for her corporeal presence, and impelled him toward the telephone. And when, finally succumbing, he sent for her, she appeared at once, without questions or rebukes, taking the separation and reunion both as a matter of course, emanating nothing except sweet tranquillity.

In her he found epitomized all he had expected to acquire in driblets from many and variant loves—docility, breeding, fire, culture, loveliness, spontaneous good-fellowship, and, above all, a certain austere delicacy of soul which disturbed him, even as he recognized and treasured it. For it brought back a memory of very early youth, when romance interpreted itself in terms of marriage, and a blonde type of beauty, immaculate but intoxicating, was sought as the elusive she. Could Margaret, he wondered, be a sort of realization of this forgotten ideal? Since he had

known her, all other women, even the alluring Rose Page, had lost their charm. In a way she had become essential, there was no denying it. Somehow he must arrange to include her in his scheme of existence. Would marriage be impossible? A certain covertness about her, something which seemed to correspond to his own secretive unscrupulousness in business affairs, made him a little hesitant. That there had been others in her life before him, though, struck him as insignificant. So far as domestic associations were concerned, he had no qualms about marrying a woman with a past. But there were business enterprises which could be consummated far more quickly through social relations. There were attractive matrons willing to help him, comely young girls—would they accept Margaret? And if not, could she compensate him for what he relinquished for her? Should he take the plunge? Trust to her beauty and tact for an adjustment of the situation? This baffling effect of covertness, too, which troubled him. Would it end disastrously? Should he risk it?

One night, giving as an excuse a stubborn headache, he left a dinner-dance early, and hurried home, nervous, irritable, and perplexed. Rose Page had been the hostess. He had seen her very seldom of late, and to-night in her dancing eyes he saw not only the habitual fervor, but a sort of warning that his dilatoriness was no longer to be endured. Among his friends, his pending betrothal to this bewitching little copy-haired woman already had caused some gossip. He knew the prospect of marrying her presented many indisputable advantages. But now that in decency he could not much longer avoid the issue, a repugnance to such dealings seized him, and a consequent yearning finally to reach a solution in Margaret's arms.

As if in lazy meditation, an unopened book beside her, she was sitting by the fire, and greeted him with a sleepy smile.

"Tired, dear? Been bored? You

look overwrought and cross. Anything horrid the matter?"

"Lots, Margaret." Pillowing his head on her soft shoulder, he noted with what maternal assuagement she pressed her cheek to his.

After a long silence, she spoke again: "John, dear, I've been thinking. You know this love of ours—it's been a beautiful, ineradicable thing. But for almost a year now it's gone on. And you know that for both of us it brings certain inconveniences, certain disadvantages. Wouldn't it be wise, now that it's at its zenith, not to wait for fate to spoil everything for us, but to end it ourselves? Tell me honestly, haven't you felt that the psychological moment for parting has arrived?"

For the first time, her serenity, bespeaking, he felt, a calm, placid indifference, angered him.

"The prospect doesn't seem in the least perturbing to you," he answered, "is this unruffled calm a pose? If so, cast it aside. It rankles."

He felt hurt. For the first time, seeking comfort, she had denied it to him. Again there was a long silence. At last, gently removing his encircling arm she leaned forward, elbows on knees, head pillowed in hands, staring into the fire.

"I'm going to have a baby, John. Isn't it wonderful?"

So softly did she speak that the full significance of her words reached him slowly. And, as he realized it, astonished, dumbfounded, he could make no reply other than to look at her in bewilderment.

"Isn't it wonderful?" she continued. "I've always been fastidiously averse to the idea, but now I'm as sentimental and joyful as they are in books, and I'll remain so, at least until the ungainly lines appear. I didn't intend to tell you, but these last few days have been so happy, and you seem sad to-night. Don't think that it will entail obligations on your part. I'm perfectly able to cope with the situation. I've told you only so that you may know I care very much, and so that you'll remember after the parting which seems imminent

that, transitory though it's been, it was real."

"Marry me, Margaret. It's the best thing to do." He spoke mechanically. Something had to be said, and he could think of nothing else. But she shook her head.

"Oh, please let's not, John. It would be disastrous, I'm sure, and it's not at all necessary. There's no stigma attached to such things nowadays. It won't hurt the baby or me, but marriage with me would hurt you. Consider it carefully, and you'll agree. You'll see how foolish it would be."

With her arms twined about him, and her love shining in her eyes, her renunciation struck him as noble and courageous. A wave of tenderness swept over him. He would consider no settlement of the question which would deprive him of her. Better to take the plunge, and let come what would.

"Margaret, dear heart, this exigency only brings to a head what's been lurking in my mind for many days. It's because I love you, and need you, that I ask. Won't you marry me?"

She looked at him inscrutably for a moment, sighed, and then answered gently:

"Why certainly, John, if you want it so much, and feel that it won't end unhappily. Certainly, dear."

John Perry's marriage proved a surprising success. At first, there was a rather sinister buzz of comment. Already he had become so prominent a figure in the business and social worlds as to make this unexpected alliance, and the implied repudiation of Mrs. Rose Page a favorite topic at clubs and teas. Certain fescennine paragraphs appeared in the shifty weeklies which purport to delve into the inner activities of smart circles. But it was an abortive attempt. Margaret proved immune to contumely. No baleful heredity, not even a humble origin came to the assistance of the scandalmongers. She had been a successful business woman; she had lived in an obscure but exclusive family hotel. Whatever her indiscretions, they had

been nicely conducted, so that her name could not be definitely connected with anyone's. The women who were her former associates in netherworld days proved unwontedly loyal; and the men whose word would have counted, admiring Perry's temerity and the woman's grit, held their tongues. But, above all, it was her refined beauty, her stamp of breeding, her low voice, her taste, tact, and charm that smoothed the path. In an incredibly short space of time the impending boycott was removed, and curiously enough, it was Rose Page who made the first move toward accepting her.

Yet, for all this smooth settlement of affairs, Perry was far from content. The disquieting effect she had given him at times, of calculating covertness, strengthened from day to day. In her every attitude, her every word, now, he believed he could detect deliberate premeditation. She appeared to be playing the part of a wife, playing it well, with a keen sense of values, but, nevertheless, playing a part. The serene austerity, too, which hitherto had attracted, evinced itself so constantly as to gall him, as to become an unceasing patience-on-a-monument manner. After a very few months he felt a chilly affection replace the old tenderness. Was it impossible, he asked himself, for a woman to be at once the wife and the mistress? Abashed even as the idea presented itself, flinging it away as disgusting, nevertheless he finally admitted to himself an inclination to seek in other quarters the ardor denied him here.

One afternoon, returning to the luxurious apartment which Margaret had furnished with such faultless taste, he heard, from the drawing-room, his wife's voice mingled with another which brought recollections of a little room in grey and silver, and Killarney roses. It was curious, he reflected as he listened, to note the contrasting voices, Margaret's tranquil tones and low, limpid laugh, and the other's quick, bright soprano interspersed frequently with trilling peals—the ideal-wife voice, the

mother voice of this light-o'-love he had married, and the mistress voice, seductive in its flowing, gliding, flexible melody, caroling from the throat of the impeccable little aristocrat whom he might have, and whom some of the time he felt he should have, married.

As he entered the room, at the sight of the two, the same idea struck him. His wife, so serene in her calm beauty, soft, grey chiffon swathed about her fine form, at her neck the inevitable pearls—Rose Page, all charmeuse and fur, modishly short-skirted, trimly shod, diamonds a-twinkle like dewdrops among the orchids of her corsage bouquet, auburn hair shimmering, brown eyes snapping, cheeks rosy, dimples and teeth very much in evidence. Was it some subtly manifested inheritance of patrician blood that antidoted, even as it intensified, the garishness of her get-up? Or, on the other hand, were superficial polish and social status deceiving him into mistaking for genuine fondness a mere hankering for what seemed a potentially congenial sweetheart? And Margaret—were atavic influences at work when this woman, who, at their first meeting, had tapped his shoulder and hailed him as "old darling" made her smooth transition to immaculate wifehood? Or did a business sense and talent for acting enable her successfully to play a chosen part? What damnable freak of fortune had brought the two together now? Instinctively, as he conversed, he scented trouble ahead. In the merry eyes lifted to him through heavy lashes lay mockery, in their laughter an insistent reminder of sentimental passages-at-arms among the Killarney roses, and an invitation, innocent in its very brazenness, for a resumption of amenities—on a more solid basis? he wondered. But Margaret's inscrutable eyes! Cool, tranquil, they seemed formidable, somehow. He was relieved when Mrs. Page rose to go.

"It's been an unfashionably long call," she bubbled, "but Mrs. Perry is so charming. If only she'll choose to be half as friendly as I hope she will!

And you'll both dine with me next week?"

Perry watched the delectable vision trip off, and turned to his wife.

"Like her, Margaret?"

"Awfully. I wonder, does it strike you, John, that if only she'd been in my position, a sort of—shall I call it semi-mondaine—and I'd been the stainless widow of ancient lineage, an arrangement might have been tried infinitely more satisfying to you than this? A twofold existence? A ménage and a maisonette? As it is, I like her, and she's sweet, but inviolable, I'm afraid. Too bad, isn't it, poor dear?"

It startled him to have her thus give utterance to ideas which had been floating in his mind for many days, and turned him suddenly, coldly angry. She was too shrewd, this wife of his, too crafty. And that she should voice her craftiness in dulcet tones only increased what he realized for the first might turn to distinct, unconquerable dislike. Before their marriage, for all her docility, warmth and plasticity had emanated from her. Now, mere ductility appeared to cover an underlying hardness and unpliability. He found himself over-dosed with patient condescension.

"I'm afraid I'll have to call you subtle, Margaret"—he spoke curtly—"and that's as fatal to a woman as to call a man well-meaning, or a book ambitious. It implies crudity, a failure of attainment. The really subtle woman cultivates sedulously a reputation for crystalline transparency."

Her big eyes fixed themselves upon him in a blank look. For an instant she appeared to oscillate, and then, as if in a last, desperate attempt to revive unreserved whole-heartedness between them, slipped her arms about his neck, and spoke appeasingly:

"Why be cross? I like your friend very much. She's charming, useful, and there's lots to be speedily accomplished. I must impress upon your friends what an excellent hostess and delightful dinner guest I am. Six or eight more weeks, and—seclusion! A few more months, and the baby will

have been born. The interim will probably be dull for you, John. But cultivate Mrs. Page. I shan't mind in the least and, just as I was, she's the admixture of chastity and wantonness which constitutes your type of woman. Cultivate her, John."

Her every word aggravated his growing aversion. The last remark seemed not only ill-natured, but flagrantly tasteless as well. He wanted to retaliate in kind.

"Thanks for suggesting it," he answered quickly, "but I feel I've had my full share of defiled Dianias."

Her arms slid from his shoulders and dropped heavily at her sides. As if turning before his eyes from flesh to some sort of metal she grew rigid. And he saw the full lips contract into a straight, narrow line, as, without another word, she turned and left the room.

From that day on, this algid induration of what had once been tender warmth seemed, to Perry, so completely to have penetrated her innermost consciousness as to reveal itself in every gesture, every glance, each steely inflexion. She no longer walked, she stalked. The crystalline quality of her voice changed to what reminded him of the raucous, whirring sound of talking machines. The lambent hue in her eyes became a sclerous blue, her graceful gestures a marionette's precise posturings. Her rôle in society, played with all the ingratiating sweetness which had once endeared her to him, served only to emphasize the cold callousness of her more intimate manner, and to foster the growing conviction which stamped her erstwhile dulcitude as but astute generalship essential to the consummation of certain definite ambitions. As the aversion she provoked in him developed from vague antipathy to unmistakable repugnance, so conversely, he grew aware of a very disquieting proneness for the omnipresent Rose.

It was Rose Page who sponsored his wife's invitation into the exclusive circle which promptly took her into its fold; Rose Page, who, striking a sudden friendship with Margaret, drifted quick-

ly into a delightful intimacy that brought a measure of radiance into the frigid atmosphere of his home; Rose Page, a little being, all frailty and vigor, a diminutive whirlwind, whose laughing ebullience gratified him to the same degree that Margaret's cataclysmic calm repelled; Rose Page who, when, previous to the baby's birth, his wife retired from society, continued to see them every day, to cheer and to ensnare him further and further with the bait of her tempestuous allure. And it was Rose Page who sat waiting with him when eventually the day arrived; who, as his wife's best friend, entered with him the room where a tiny, frail boy, kept alive only with the aid of skilful surgery, lay; and to whom Margaret, ignoring her husband, turned with a faint smile on her white lips. Rose Page it was, too, who, with her daily visits, brightened the gloomy suspense of the long, ensuing weeks when, in the room above, the battle for the baby's life waged hotly, and Margaret, immobile, silent, steely, sat vacantly staring into the withered little face, and waiting with folded hands.

One late afternoon, he was sitting with her after a particularly depressing half-hour in the dreary room above. Why, in the face of Margaret's indubitable distress, he should feel his rancor augment with each sight of her, he could not understand. Perhaps because it evinced itself so coldly. Perhaps because his despondency craved only the radiant warmth exemplified in the little woman beside him.

"There's something so—so lurid in the air. I feel as if I can't smile any more, no matter how hard I try. Margaret makes me shiver, sitting so quietly up there. Why can't she cry? Why doesn't she break down? And you, John—you're so white and miserable and drawn looking. Light the lamp, won't you? I can't bear this murky dusk."

She sprang from her chair, and walked nervously back and forth, winking back the tears, and wringing her little hands helplessly. Facing him,

finally she stopped, and laughed a feeble laugh which ended in a faint sob.

"I'm a fine friend, am I not?" she asked. "Coming here to cheer you, and getting all weepy and shaky myself. But the whole affair's sinister, somehow. John, dear friend, why do you look so unhappy? The baby'll get well, and just as soon as he's stronger, Margaret will be quite all right, too."

Suddenly he reaches forward, and gripped her wrists.

"Rose"—the hoarse, strangling voice he could not recognize as his own—"Rose, do you know that even as I realize she's in anguish, I hate that woman up there?"

The color left her face, but he drew her, unresisting, toward him as he continued:

"She's hard, cold, callous. I know that what led me to care for her was nothing but a clever pose. And I hate her because she tricked me into losing you. For I know you care even though you try to hide it, don't you, dear? Every little look and smile tells me so, and makes me so—so abjectly grateful, Rose. It's your place she's usurped, and I hate her for it. But we'll find some way out of the mess. Only don't desert me, and tell me that you care."

Though she shook her head, and drew back from him he saw the surrender in her eyes, and wanted triumphantly to take her in his arms. But in a whisper she pleaded:

"John, dear, don't. It's all so ghastly. The little new-born baby—Margaret grief-stricken—you, her husband, I, her best friend—here, in her home—it's shameful of us!"

"There's a suffering infant up there—true," he answered, "and a mother watching over it in an agony of suspense—true. The child happens to be mine, and the woman my wife and your friend—all quite true, Rose. But what have they to do with us? Recollect that there's a man in the question, too, a man aching for those warm, sweet lips of yours, and a man whom you love. Are you going to meet his infinite need of you with irrelevant eva-

sions? No quibbling, now! Answer yes or no."

She stood for a moment in silence and then spoke tremulously:

"To-morrow I'll hate myself, and be ashamed. To-morrow we must both forget, for I won't have any stealthy love affair. But to-day, because you look so unhappy—"

With a quick sob, she threw her arms about his neck. He thought that he had never seen anything quite so beautiful as the smile on her lips, and the light in her eyes. . . .

And a moment later he wanted to cry out in horror, as a greenish pallor overspread her face, and a twisted grimace superseded her smile. He lifted his eyes. In the doorway stood Margaret.

As if remaining on the scene only, since her presence had become known, long enough politely to explain it, she stood, poised in an attitude of flight, the shimmer of her grey dressing-gown and of her fair hair hanging in long braids, her whiteness and stoniness all giving her the effect at once of a sinister ghost, and of a figure wrought in metal.

"I beg your pardon." For all his agitation Perry noticed again how exactly her voice was like the whirring of a talking machine.

"I beg your pardon," she repeated, "and sincerely. It's a dreadfully embarrassing situation. One hates even accidentally to be an eavesdropper. But don't distress yourself, Rose. Don't imagine for an instant that you're violating a friendship, or breaking a trusting wife's heart. I'm sorry I intruded. It wasn't intentional. Have no qualms about continuing the tender encounter. I shan't return, and shall see that the servants don't interrupt you." She turned away.

"Wait a minute!" Dropping Rose's arm, Perry strode across the room. "Don't be quite so sure of making a striking exit. It's a way you have, plotting and scheming, and then using your grand manners to cover it all. You shan't this time. This tender encounter as you call it is a very signifi-

cant thing. I happen to care for this woman, and she for me. I'm going to find some way out of this rotten mess. What do you intend to do about it?"

"Nothing at all, my dear John," she answered evenly. "And don't you think, since it's no concern of mine, you two might continue the discussion without my aid? I'm not particularly interested, really."

An imploring glance from Rose kept back his retort. Darting across the room, tears streaming down her cheeks, she faced the other woman.

"Dear Margaret, I'm so ashamed. It's all so terrible, but—well, I love him. I must have loved him for a long time without knowing it, and to-day—all of a sudden!—Oh, my dear, you're big enough, and brave enough—so long as it's come why not let's all face it here and now, and sift it out? Why not?"

"My poor Rose, don't be mawkish. Why are you considering me as an outraged wife? I assure you, I don't feel in the least outraged. And as for the three of us discussing it, don't you find the proverbial triangular big scene a trifle coarse? It would be as tasteless of me to intrude in your affairs, as for you to intrude in mine. Why turn a melodious love duet into a cacophonous trio? Let's have no dramatics. Lunch with me to-morrow, won't you?" Once more she turned away.

"I'll not have it!" White with anger, Perry blocked her way. "I tell you, we're going to settle this thing right away! What do you mean by sneaking down here to eavesdrop, and trying to explain it as accidental, you, who for the last ten weeks haven't left your room? Understand, once and for all, I'm finished. You'll have to get a divorce or something. Our marriage has been farcical, the result of ambition on your part, transitory passion on mine, and a—well, shall we call it an unforeseen contingency?"

Slowly she turned to him, and for the first time in many weeks, looked steadily into his face.

"Since you're determined to make Rose a confidante, well and good. But

let me add, not only was the baby a material factor in the situation before our marriage, he was deliberately intentional, too, one of the schemes you accuse me of. I had no hankering for motherhood. I admit it freely now. As for interloping, these slippers make no sound; I should have worn my mules. And I left my room for the first time in many weeks because I didn't think it quite fitting for the servants to summon you. You see, the baby died some ten minutes ago. Awfully considerate of him, don't you think? Perhaps deliberately intentional, too—in deft retaliation."

Again she turned away, and this time walked noiselessly from the room.

That the grim realities of the next two days seemed but part of a grisly dream only intensified Perry's dejection. He felt as if he could no longer bear the dull pain of it all, a pain without the arrowy assuagement of pangs, steady, relentless, enduring. Rose, who had departed abruptly, shaken with frightened sobs, denied herself to him when, made desperate by the arctic bleakness of his home, he tried to see her. And, interpreting this unexpected desertion as big-hearted renunciation, his rancor toward the silent, white-lipped woman, so correct in her sorrow, so faultless a picture of afflicted motherhood, became with every hour more deep-rooted and implacable. To see her neatly folding away notes of condolence for future reference, recording the names of those who had sent flowers, arranging gruesome details with the undertakers, concerning herself with the fit of her mourning apparel, and all so detachedly, so exactly as if a superhuman fortitude were holding in check an outburst of grief as to inspire sympathy on all sides, maddened him, and made him long to cry out to the world that all this was sham sorrow, specious simulacra of gloom contrived by a schemestress who was bringing to bear all her ingenuity to thwart an upheaval of her plans. Even her ashy pallor struck him as false, as if a sort

of mental cosmetic had been produced by her astuteness, and applied by her will.

On the day of the funeral, though, he entered alone the room where the little coffin was placed, and stood looking down at the tiny, shrivelled face. Massed about by costly flowers, there was something in its frail helplessness that seemed feebly to remonstrate, mildly to protest against some injustice, something that made Perry's bitterness at realizing in this wrinkled specimen the son he had yearned for, change to deep tenderness. The shrunken face, the fragile body, the vacant look as of an inexpressible sorrow, all seemed to mark the baby as some piteously futile little votive offering spurned by a fastidious god. He felt awe-stricken. That blue, chilled look where should have been pink chubbiness,—had this being come into the world already frozen by its mother's heart? And Margaret, the warm, clinging Margaret of lawless days, the red-lipped Margaret with the slow, grave smile! He had watched each step of her gradual glaciation. Might he have been, in some inexplicable way, partially responsible for it? Vividly now he recalled halcyon hours with her. Could it really be possible that all her sweetness had been but a dexterously assumed pose? Had he misjudged her? Had he—

"Wouldn't it be wise to stop shaking like a fool? The undertakers are coming in. Are you trying to give them an impression of grief-stricken fatherhood?" Silently she had entered the room and stood beside him, smiling.

Topping as they did his first palliative consideration of her, her words struck him with augmented force. And a feeling, terrifying in its well-nigh irresistible potency, swept over him, a maniacal desire to plunge his fist deep into the imperturbable white face. He felt his throat turn hot and dry. He heard the muscles of his clenched hands crack forebodingly.

All through the day, even when giving directions to the servants, even when attending to various pressing

business details, and especially when he sat alone with her on the long ride to and from the cemetery, the impulse persisted, becoming with every moment more formidable. He found himself folding his arms, or, the fingers interlaced tightly, clasping his hands, using physical precautions to hold in check the maddening desire. He experienced a strange commingling of desperate emotions. An aching longing for Rose blended incongruously with memories of the tenderness, the devotion, of all that he looked for from Rose, which he had once had from this hulk of torpid stoniness at his side. With the thought of this dead tenderness came a wish to revenge its old manifestations, to discover whether a well-directed blow could pierce the steely coldness of her cheeks. And the thought that perhaps he, too, was to blame only incited him further. A mad jubilation rang in his heart at the idea of inflicting undeserved pain upon this woman whom he hated.

When they returned to the dismal house he hurried away from her, and, weak and nervous from conflicting emotions, ordered some brandy. As he was about to pour it, however, he noticed her standing in the doorway.

"Won't you please go away?" There was something at once ominous and pleading in his smothered tones.

"No, John,"—slowly she came into the room,—“this is the time for a settling of scores. Your side I know without your telling me. So all you'll have to do is play the attentive auditor for a very little while. I've prepared my big speech and shan't waste words.”

She seated herself opposite to him, her hands clasped lightly, her expression bored. As from a distance, he heard again the taut muscles in his hands crack.

"Matrimony," she went on, "was my aim from the start. I had no mamma to guide me to the altar, and no predilection to a state of genteel chastity until the proverbial 'right man' came along. But any woman, any American woman with my intelligence

and my looks, could not but have gleaned, as I did, the fine points of the husband-baiting craft. Four men taught me, four representative types, an actor, an unscrupulous politician, a rabid reformer, and a banker. The actor embodied high-sounding ineptitude, the politician engaging rascality, the reformer hypocritical puritanism, while the banker epitomized the three, and added neuropathic energy, and keen psychological insight linked inharmoniously with the glucosic sentimentality which inundated them one and all. Blend these elements in greater or less quantities, and you have the average American man, a type which tends to replace with some apotheosized Get-rich-quick Wallingford, the estimable Lincoln as a nation's ideal. All of which is not as irrelevant as it may sound. For it was because I grasped in just what proportions these traits were fused in you that I was able to inveigle you into marriage, and because I neglected sufficiently to reckon with them, that the eventual catastrophe came.

"There was your sentimentality. You know the lady-writers' pet situation? A neglected wife's rebellion at her husband's absorption in business, through which he is able to supply her with the luxury she demands? In our case, it was somewhat the same situation, with the parts ludicrously reversed. It was no easy thing to force the people in your sphere to accept me, as I felt they must, for your sake. It was a hard battle and consumed all my time and thought. Consequently, I omitted to supply the requisite sweetness, and you found me growing cold and hard. And when, on the day Rose first called, I realized how far it had gone, in an attempt to recoup, I lost my head. You recollect my telling you to cultivate her? I thought to be generous, kind. I forgot the American man's streak of prudery which makes him, while he expects from his wife forgiveness for amorous intrigues, grow rankled if she indifferently countenance them. You got very angry.

You said something very nasty and vile about defiled Dianas. I'll never forgive it. I felt myself glacié as I heard you. I'll never thaw. From that moment, I no longer loved you, John.

"For, unbelievable though it may seem, I did care for you. Perhaps it was because my heart was in the work that at first the strategics so signally succeeded. As in the years before I knew you my ability as a wage-earner enabled me to get some glow out of life by not having to consider the bank-accounts of those whom it pleased me to favor, so, with our marriage, I thought at once to consummate a business deal, and acquire a husband I loved. When the blow came, it fell as heavily upon me as upon you. In one way our marriage was a stupid failure. But—

"There's the other side, the business side. As far as that's concerned, it's ideal. For what I receive, I pay in full. Though I schemed, it was a medially honest deal. You've acquired for a wife a woman of taste, thrift, and culture, who can hold her own socially, and who, as the good-looking, self-made, twentieth-century invitiée of women's page interviews, is of material assistance in your business career. It's an altogether good bargain.

"I don't believe you love Rose. I believe your volte-face was nothing but pique. But, if you do, conduct a stealthy liaison. That's all you may expect from me. There'll be no public disruption,—no divorce. As Mrs. John Perry I've come into advantages I won't relinquish, for as Mrs. Margaret Perry, divorcée, there would be absolute oblivion. So I won't abdicate in Rose's favor. My position she shan't usurp. That's final. Do you agree?"

There was no eagerness in her query, courteous consideration, that was all. It was as if she had given an ultimatum from which there was no escape, and wished, with superficial politeness, to alleviate any rancor he might feel. In apathetic ennui, she sat waiting, merely as a matter of form, for his answer. This exasperating equipoise, together

with the lucidity of her words, and what struck him as a trickiness in specious analysis, all served but as fuel to the maddening desire which, he felt, was nearing a culmination. With a convulsive movement he gripped the arms of his chair, and dug his hands into the carved wood.

"Go away," he managed finally to whisper.

"Very well. Answer whenever you choose."

She paused at the table to fill a water-tumbler half full of pure brandy, and emptied it in a swallow. He thought that the burning fluid must congeal into a lump of ice once it touched that frosty throat of hers. Then, filling the tumbler to its very brim, she started away without spilling a drop, so steady was her hand. His own trembled violently. Deep blue ridges marked the palms, and they shook so that only after several ineffectual attempts did he succeed in filling his glass. With the first swallow a mitigant pang shot over his senses, followed by an enervation which soothed. It was good finally to be rid of the woman if but for a little while, and the spirits provided the first glow of warmth he had felt since Rose left two days ago. It was an evanescent mood, however. A moment later the impalpable chill hovered over him again, insidious and dire. Quickly he poured another glass, and noticed that now his hand was much steadier. Again the glow, and the subsequent lassitude. Again a chill, and an insatiable craving for more of this thrice-welcome nepenthe. But, with the third glass, the relieving warmth turned to an agitant ignition, every faculty forthwith breaking bounds with an unbridled license, which terrified in its stimulation. Judgment, memory, imagination, will,—all became perceptibly unruly. Mad yearning for Rose,—vague, untoward memories of a certain lovely Margaret he had known very long ago,—hatred of some indomitable, living, breathing lay figure which had replaced her,—hatred doubly vivified because it had deprived him of the old Margaret, and was de-

priving him now of Rose,—grim determination to wreak vengeance upon this thing of stone,—finally from the chaos of recalcitrant thoughts in which he found himself struggling, two dominant ideas separated themselves, and focused on his consciousness. One of these women he must see, and quickly: the other he must punish. In a daze, he reached for the telephone, and gave Rose's number. Her maid answered that she was not at home. He felt hurt. Why was this woman of his dreams not at his side, now when he needed her so? He filled another glass, but barely tasted it. The stuff had lost its savour. Now only one idea obsessed him. He wanted Rose. Margaret he had forgotten completely. He must see Rose. A grim, cheerless chill for which there was no remedy save a laughing voice with tears in it, soft, soothing words without sense or logic, an impetuous woman who never calculated, never analyzed, never contrived, settled over him. Was he drunk, he wondered? His hands no longer trembled, his steps were steady. But the room swam about him, and his head throbbed painfully. In a futile attempt to quiet the aching pulsation, he threw himself upon a couch, his hands pressed to his temples.

Gradually the pain lessened. Helpless, weary, utterly incompetent to cope with the situation, he gave himself up to the longing—somewhat pleasing now rather than bitter—for Rose. A blurred image of her came before his eyes. His arms moved unconsciously as if to clasp her. The conviction that she must come to comfort him in his extremity persisted. At times he fancied that he could distinguish her voice as from a distance; the fragrance of the perfume she used seemed now and then to steal into his consciousness; each little while he would start at finding his arms in truth empty. It was monstrous, incredible, that she should remain away. A little while longer, and he would see her. . . .

How long he lay there he could not tell. Moments seemed to pass as eons,

eternities as instants. But the feeling that she was with him gradually became a definite certainty. Surely against his shoulder he felt the light pressure of her head. He thought he recognized the coppery glint of her hair,—distinguished a soothing murmur coming, as it seemed, from afar. Once again he stretched out his arms, and this time there was no mistaking it. They had enveloped a woman's soft form. He half aroused himself. Someone was kneeling beside the couch. Someone was clinging to him.

A great joy swept over him. He lay in lazy lassitude, his eyes feasting upon the strand of hair which touched his cheek. Like some divine radiance it shone, its very color etherealized less coppery, more golden, and with a subdued silvery sheen. Summoning all the strength of his will, he sought to understand, through the deafening hum about him, the words she whispered.

"Hylobate—an ape: hymar—a wild ass."

He opened his eyes wider in a blank stare. Was someone mocking him? Where had he seen the still, white face bending over him? The fair hair in long braids? The grey dressing-gown?

"Hylobate—a species of ape: rymar—a wild ass. The dictionary was making fun of me, horrid thing!" she murmured again, slowly shaking her head.

Then, in a flash, he came to his full senses, recognized his wife, grasped the situation. Lying immobile, her words, of ridicule and stupid derision, he felt sure, caused a mighty incensation to overthrow his soberer judgment. His fingers itched once more . . . his hands clenched . . .

With a peculiar cry, half a snarl, half a sob, he sprang up and struck her across the face.

At liberty at last, the murderous impulse developed into a mad effrenation. It gave him a tremendous thrill at last to have seen her flinch before his blow. Anxious entirely to regain his composure so that in calm, equable triumph he might enjoy battering down what remained of her obduracy, he averted

his head. She made no sound. And when finally he turned to her again, smiling in fascinated anticipation of the punishment to follow, he looked into her face with glad, inexorable eyes. . . .

And, as he looked, a numbness stole over him, rigid muscles slackened, his hands fell limp, and a cold sweat came to his forehead. For, on the upturned face, he saw, faint, feeble, and shadowed with pain, the ghost of her slow grave smile and, grey though the lips were, where he had struck her a single drop of blood shone forth like an auspicious omen, like a symbol of the old, crimson happiness.

"Hylobate—an ape: hymar—a wild ass: Hymen, god of marriage. Hell of a bun on, and so have you." A hazy murmur, in her voice there was a certain sweet throatiness, as if the metallic quality were being slowly dominated by the limpidness of long ago. But her irrational words! A sudden fear smote him that she had gone mad. He hurried to help her to her feet. But she shook her head.

"Pickled, old darling," she whispered shakily, "awfully well oiled. Quite rational, but feet won't work right. Never could stand brandy straight. Drank immoderately. Went to my head. Hylobate—a species of ape—must explain—"

A radiance inundated her face. Through the drab pallor, he detected tints of ivory and rose.

"Must explain," she went on. "Must explain hylobate, hymar, Hymen. House so bleak I drank too much. Got disgracefully soused. Brandy brought enlightenment. Saw I'd been all wrong. Wanted to renounce—wanted to be just—wanted to make melodrama exit—give you up to Rose—make you happy. Tried to write note—leave it behind—slip away—usual thing, you know. Couldn't do it. Couldn't spell. Wanted to ask pardon for being hypercritical—couldn't spell damphool word. Hyper-hypo-hypercritical—hypocrisy—got all mixed up. Fetched the dictionary. Very difficult task finding hy's. Found 'em finally—random. Hylobate—spe-

cies of ape—little further down, hymar—wild ass. Dictionary calling me names. Deserved it—been a dolt and imbecile. Looked further—Hymen, god of marriage—culminating touch of irony. Looked at definition—son of Bacchus and Venus! Enlightenment! Illumination! Joy!"

Suddenly her voice rang out clear and sure as of old, and the maudlin hesitancy became absolute lucidity:

"Son of Bacchus and Venus! There's divine parentage for you! Cupid's half-brother with stronger wings! Love and intoxication! That's what matrimony means, John,—that's what makes it holy! And I'd been putting Hymen in a strait-jacket. Like the rest of the world, I'd been treating him like the bastard offspring of some epicene Grundy. No wonder he was revenged! Does the idea seem silly, dear? Did I mistake it for a miraculous revelation? If you want me to go, I'll go. Do you want me to go?"

Big and pleading, her eyes pierced his. In his heart was a surging toward this resurrection of the woman he had

loved, kneeling before him, entrancingly lovely as never before. All thoughts of Rose were obliterated. Here was warmth, assuagement, understanding. In his eyes she saw his answer. Slowly she rose to her full, superb height, and stretched out her great white arms.

"We're both a little soused, dear. Let's keep on always being a little soused without the aid of brandy. Make matrimony one long drinking bout! An unending jag! No promise of constancy, no contracts, no more schemes and ambitions! Intoxication and love! Bacchus and Venus! I've been a low-down trickster. But I'm not a trickster now. I'm not a dutiful wife now. I'm just your old girl come back to you, John, with the love she's always had for you unleashed at last! And my arms"—her voice dropped again to a whisper—"they're so confoundedly empty, dear."

On his face he felt her tears. A great dry sob burst from him as his lips met her blood-stained ones.

"Crying jag," she murmured, tenderly.



BUSINESS OF DYING

By Richard R. Newbold

THE Stage Manager raved and stormed. The rehearsal was everything that it should not be, he said, and this death scene was the worst part of it. Good heavens, did the tragedian suppose that any human being had ever shuffled off his mortal coil in such an unconvincing manner as that? And why was he still lying there? Why— They ran to the tragedian and tried to lift him to his feet. The son-of-a-gun was dead.



WHEN a man repents a sin it is a sign that it wasn't as pleasant as he expected.

THE WORLD'S COSTLIEST LUXURY

By Patience Trask

IT isn't automobiles, and it isn't wine, clothes, travel, jewels, theaters, dining, or collecting paintings, rugs, statuary, tapestries, or skeletons of pliocene amphibia, this costliest of all luxuries in the world, because the whole is ever greater than the part, no less now than in the days of Mr. Euclid of Greece, and this supreme extravagance of mankind may include any or all of the minor ones mentioned, for it is—men's casual and purposeless entertaining of us women.

Pause with me a moment while I hasten to add that I do not refer to the recklessness of the rounder; the giddy gaddings of gilded gentry, the noisy, nocturnal nonsense of nonage. Of such I know only what I have been told, and that, I do not care to repeat. Nor do I allude to the money a man spends upon his *fiancé* (actual or presumptive) or his wife, for purposes of persuasion, diplomacy, bribery or atonement. Such expenditures are scarcely voluntary, and come not under the heading of luxuries, but rather under that of investment in necessities, at least of a peaceful existence. The man who gives to the lady whom he is endeavoring to inveigle into a lifetime of servitude, a pearl necklace or a diamond tiara, is not indulging in extravagance; he is merely baiting his trap. If he captures the quarry, and later is discovered buying for her an electric coupé, or sending her to Paris with *carte blanche* on the Rue de la Paix, he still is immune from the accusation of opening the door for unbridled luxury, for investigation, doubtless, will show that he is echoing the historic plea, "Let us have peace," and paying the war indemnity to that end.

These are not luxuries, but rather the spoils in the eternal battle of the sexes. On the contrary, I am now speaking of men and women who are at peace with each other. Call it an armed neutrality if you will, and in peril of being Belgiumed without notice—that is sheer persiflage. I will drop the metaphor, for I have a neat little blue slip before me stating that THE SMART SET will not accept war stories. These remarks I am about to make, therefore, I insist, are annals of peace, compiled largely from my own experience as a not entirely unattractive young woman, constantly receiving a full share of unearned and unrewarded attentions. I am of that vast army of women upon whom men spend without stint their time and money, without hoping, perhaps without desiring, and certainly without suggesting any return of any nature whatsoever, and with whom their relations are scarcely more than those of casual acquaintances, and their associations absolutely conventional. We women accept it all as a matter of course, as if it were our just due in compensation for the handicap in life through having been born women, and our right to collect where we can from the more unfortunate branch of the race. We have no thought of paying, for what are a few smiles, a little conversation, and the display of our best frocks? Obviously the man gets less for his money in the transaction than he does in any other, which, in itself, establishes the fact that it is the world's costliest luxury. If they did not carry on the practice we would pine away with grief and die young, but did any of us ever stop to ask herself *why* they do it?

They begin it, the dear, benevolent men, when they are hardly out of their prams. Clutching in his tiny fist the first nickel entrusted to him to spend as he desires, the proud lad marches his favorite among the girls of the neighborhood to the nearest candy store, grandly making his purchase and dividing equally with his lady. He continues the habit, formed thus early, until every last hair and tooth have gone to join the great majority, and his heirs apparent have guardians appointed to conserve his fortune so that, after his death, there may be some of it left wherewith they may continue the good work. On its face the action seems unselfish, from the very fact that it gives pleasure without prospect of reward. This, however, is not consistent with the characters of the men who are most active in this direction. For example, consider the case of the child mentioned above. Children are fundamentally selfish; one has no more right to expect unselfishness in a child than to demand it of a flower, which shoots its stem as much higher than that of its neighbor as possible, to get more sunlight. The law of *meum* and *tuum* is the alpha and omega of the juvenile code, for while the boy will magnanimously lend his playthings, he never permits the beneficiary to forget where the ownership is vested, and always expects a *quid pro quo*; but when it comes to spending his money, he wants companionship, and gravitates naturally to that of persons of the opposite sex. Likewise with the same individual when in later years he reaches the decayed condition suggested. He will refuse to contribute to charity, turn a deaf ear to the appeals of poor relations, exact the last farthing in business deals, and then, with magnificent disregard for cost, will entertain women who, he knows deep down in his consciousness, have about as much interest in him as a squirrel has in the tree from which the nuts fall.

Nor should the custom be confused with, or placed upon the same basis as the entertaining by women. The lat-

ter, while ordinarily imputed by persons who cannot distinguish between cause and effect, motive and result, to ostentation, ambition for leadership or the warfare of cliques and sets, is actually the mere recognition of custom, which has laid down certain rules as inflexible as that which prescribes turkey for Christmas dinner. Man, in his entertaining, is not subject to any such dicta. No less would be thought of him if he did not do it, and no more, except superficially, because he does. He is a free agent. "No hungry generations tread thee down." He is not called upon to divide the season into certain equal periods, and mark the passage of each with festivities to which he must invite a certain distinctively defined coterie, or be forever recognized as an outlander. Were this the case, the custom would cease to be a luxury and become mere routine. Just one typical example from my own experience is sufficient to establish this point clearly:

Recently I journeyed across the continent and back. Preliminary thereto I calculated the cost of my railway ticket, compartment, meals on the dinner, hotel expenses, and such major items of expense, and added two hundred dollars for incidentals. I came back with two hundred and fifty dollars, and Mrs. Grundy herself might have been present every minute. As I was leaving New York a friend introduced a man who was also bound for the Coast, accompanied by his sister. Before we had cleared the tunnels he had found my compartment and inquired if there was anything he could do for me, and as we shot across the Harlem River bridge he insisted that I should be his guest at dinner. This continued clear to San Francisco, excepting that, for the novelty of spending my own money, after the first morning out, I arose early and breakfasted alone. From cocktails to cordials, from tips to taxis, the pleasure was all mine, the cost all his.

I thought at first that it might have been prompted by a desire to provide

his sister with companionship, but in her case also the law was in operation, and she soon was adopted by a fatherly person, and seldom formed a member of our happy party, of which, I believe, she was secretly glad, as we had little in common. Nor had her philanthropic brother and I any special affinity for each other, either, for that matter. He was one of those omnivorous devourers of scenery—one of those men who, if they see, from the train, a stream more than three feet wide, or a building more than three stories high, make life miserable for passengers and trainmen, asking questions, consulting maps and guide-books, and refusing absolutely to be happy until they know the name and all the available facts concerning the subject. His attentions toward me were hardly more than mechanical, and simply "that it might be fulfilled which was written." When we reached San Francisco he almost apologized for the fact that he and his sister were to be the guests of friends, and could not take me with them, but he did his best to atone by escorting me about, whenever he could tear himself free from other obligations; and when I returned, several weeks before he was to come back, he hunted around until he found a friend who was journeying eastward at the same time, and entrusted me to the care of this substitute, who was in every way worthy. I have seen neither man since, nor has either of them so much as written me a line.

No woman who has traveled but has had such experiences as this. There can be nothing so purposeless as a train acquaintance of that sort. The situation does not admit of any great freedom of intercourse, but the men do not seem to care. They must entertain, and so make the most of the conditions. If they are unable to find a recipient for their attentions, they bore themselves to death with papers and magazines, solitaire and tobacco. Travel costs a woman about half what it does a man, in consequence. The same applies to vacations at summer resorts,

and to all other conditions where opportunity offers.

"Ungrateful woman!" it seems to me I can hear, winging down the breeze. "Would you thus scorn the chivalry of men?" I think the voice emanates from the capital-S South. But ingratitude is farthest from my thoughts, and daily and nightly I raise my voice in devout thanks to the providential order of creation which causes this to be thus; but when you say "chivalry" there are several words that come into my mind, such as pish, tush, fiddlesticks, and chivalry-your-grand-mother. I need hardly more than quote a man, so much more famous than I can ever hope to be, Edmund Burke, who, late in the eighteenth century, observed that "the age of chivalry is gone; that of sophisters, economists, and calculators has succeeded." The "you-all" brand of gallantry, that passes in the South for chivalry, is charming, but superficial. It is at its zenith in the receiving department of social affairs, but seldom reaches a stage so virulent as to make a man reckless with his money. In the good old days, when woman was a helpless sort of superior worm, chivalry had a real basis, and was itself real. We were pitiable objects then, we women, and men were so downright sorry for us that they were moved to charity of word and deed. For a damsel in distress, of whose name, street address and telephone number he was absolutely ignorant, the knight-errant would carve his way through portcullis and bastion, according to that voracious chronicler, Sir Thomas Malory, and others. But in these days, woman is seldom unable to take care of herself, and the knight who goes a-riding in search of woes to dispel and wrongs to right is in danger of becoming suspected by the postal authorities and the officials who enforce the Mann law. So chivalry has been highly diluted, and tapered off to gallantry, which consists, principally, in speaking in low, throaty tones, removing the hat in the elevator, and remarking that the lady reminds

him of a lyric by Arthur Symons. In the days of chivalry, the gallant was not considered as a particularly desirable person; now we have the gallant, and in lieu of the forcefulness of real chivalry, try to establish him as a chevalier. He is highly decorative, but among the men of whom I speak, the men who devote their energies and resources to keeping women interested in life, he is most noticeable by the fact that he is not present, at least not as a motive force.

What makes the phenomenon of this greatest of all luxuries the more interesting, on the contrary, is that they who indulge in it to the greatest extent are found in the ranks of successful men of affairs, professional men who are the leaders in their specialties, financiers, merchant princes—not the mere butterflies of society who happen to have been born with more money or lineage than they know how to utilize normally. The man who has the largest party, including the most brilliantly gowned and jeweled women, and the most costly wines, at the most fashionable restaurant, you will usually discover to be a person of importance in commercial or learned callings. But no matter how high his standing, or how vast the interests which compel his attention in business hours, they are never of such consequence that they cannot be interrupted to make arrangements for the feminine diversions of the evening. Day in and day out the wheels of the world pause, the brake of anticipation is placed upon the axle of business, while a dainty figure passes across the vision of the driver of the huge machine. Millions tremble in the balance, problems of state await a hair-line decision, and justice takes forty winks, while the real consideration of importance of the day is decided—who shall be invited to complete that party?

The dance mania arrives, and, since that is a factor necessary to success in pursuit of the great luxury, men whose "Yes" and "No" make stock-ticker and monarch tremble like a compass in a dynamo factory, bow the knee, figura-

tively as well as literally, to humanly insignificant individuals known as dancing masters, whose normal earning capacity, as one critic recently remarked, is about \$7.63 a week, net. Some pretend they like it; others openly mop their brows, perspiring less from the heat than from the humidity. Why is it that certain favorites among these pedagogues of terpsichore, who yesteryear were grateful for recognition of the most fleeting variety on the small-time vaudeville circuits, to-day own motorcars, villas, diamonds, town houses, country houses and large collections of bonds, their smiles and favors courted as once were those of Dame DuBarry herself? (Yet when I say to-day, I mean yesterday, for this was last season's affair, and at this writing it has not yet appeared what direction next the demand for diversion will take.) It was simply because they, as a class, held the same strategic position as regards him who would bask in the favor of lovely woman, as did the DuBarry for him who sought favor of fat old Louis. Hence the hold-up. The dancing masters knew that the one thing for which men will pay without auditing the bill is the knack of making themselves popular with the women who "belong," and reaped the harvest while the reaping was good. This season it may be a matter of vaulting over chairs, or teaching angora cats to walk on their hind legs. Whatever it is that women find most entertaining, the grave and reverend seigneurs will do, if it depletes their bank accounts and forces them to go into athletic training preliminary to taking part in the merry round of pleasures.

Another theory that I have heard propounded is that men are themselves entertained by their women guests, that they are stimulated mentally by the association with brilliant members of the opposite sex. There is just one trouble with this argument, and that is that it is based upon the assumption that men who entertain seek the society of clever women. Which is not so. Come now,

you women who decorate the festivities of which I speak, admit that you are not the clever ones of your sex; or if you are clever, confess that you dare not permit yourself to betray the fact in your conversation. You are allowed to be smart, to say cutting things about your friends, but would you dare say a serious thing, or comment thoughtfully upon any subject in which the men present would naturally be expected to be interested? You may be as clever as you please in your sartorial decorations—that is the principal part of your side in the game. In the seclusion of your own home you may devote hours of intense thought to ways and means of outshining your women friends, or competitors, but you would not, for an instant, consider devoting any part of the day to a study of important public or scientific matters, in order to be able to get something of the point of view of the men who are to entertain you. The strong-minded woman, the suffragette, will deny this with a great showing of indignation, but such disavowals are the outcome of one of two states of mind—insincerity or ignorance of the facts. I will again draw from my somewhat brief, but varied, experience to show what I mean, and what are the results of going contrary to this general principle:

I believe it was my second season, or late in my first. There had just returned from a certain distant continent a famous traveler, who had done a great deal of exploring and hunting. I was invited to a small and select dinner party at which he was to be the guest of honor. I saw the opportunity of a lifetime to attract the attention of a great man, and for two or three days buried myself in volumes concerning the country which the explorer had been traversing. I amassed a lot of information, so that I would not only understand in a general way what he was talking about, but be able to ask intelligent questions, and establish my mental superiority over the other women guests. I learned that flora was something besides a woman's name, and

fauna not a kind of deer. I located the principal rivers and mountains definitely on a mental map, and in such laborious manner prepared for my triumph. I was seated beside the hero at dinner, and with serene exercise of my Christian name, waited for the frivolous small-talk of the opening of the evening to pass off and give me my opportunity. My head was so full of scientific knowledge that I could not get down to the level of the remainder of the company, with the tragic result that I lost the entire evening. The small-talk never did end, and all the attention I received was purely perfunctory. And there I was, chock full of brainy stuff that nobody wanted, while the lion of the hour, remarking how good it was to forget wildernesses for a while, capitulated to the purely feminine chatter of a sweet young thing who entertained him with a full account of her doings at Newport that summer. I thereupon registered a vow which I have never violated since, that thenceforth I would confine my intellectual activities to the privacy of my boudoir, and immediately I became a great success among men who want our company if it be not weighted down with brains, and soggy with useful and instructive ideas. There is a logical, psychological explanation of this principle, too, in that men know their sole claim to superiority lies in their brains, and instinctively protect themselves in this respect by refusing to believe that a woman can think anything of value that they have not often thought before.

Are we, then, merely so many pretty pictures that men like to gaze upon, admire, and then change for other pictures? Do men who entertain regard their women guests as simply so many iridescent spots in the kaleidoscope of existence? Do they go to all this trouble and expense to gain our good graces, solely for our spectacular qualities? Do we give them absolutely nothing? On the contrary, we give them a great deal, but what we give, and what they accept so avidly, they

will deny, with perfect unanimity and sincerity, that they desire. This is because men seldom try to analyze their own motives, and when they do try they seldom succeed, because their mental processes, being trained for substantial phases of life, do not operate smoothly when directed toward the superficial side.

So if you tell a man that all this indulgence in the costliest of all luxuries is for nothing but the satisfaction of his vanity, he will be amused, at first, and then, if you persist, angry. When he reaches this second stage you will know that he is convinced of the truth of what you say. For man always has regarded, and always will regard, vanity as an attribute manufactured by the forces of evolution for the exclusive use of women and effeminate men. He will not admit for an instant that all human qualities are to be found equally distributed among both sexes. Love, jealousy, cupidity, hatred, anger, ambition, fear, selfishness, generosity, fidelity,—even curiosity in a pinch,—he will agree are to be found in both women and men. He will subscribe to the statement, even, that he has experienced all these emotions himself, at one time or another, in the course of his life—but vanity! The idea! "Of course," he will say, "there are vain men, but it is incorrect to say that men are vain." In other words he will admit that certain men have acquired certain feminine traits, but you can never convince him that there are no such things as exclusively feminine traits. Ask him, then, to name something else besides vanity which he regards as a characteristic of woman only, and watch his mental wriggling. Why, then, is vanity, of all the human qualities, to be set aside for one branch of the race, to the entire exclusion, as a class, of the other? There is no logic in it. The gods were never wasteful, and never did things by halves. If they did not have sufficient of any particular gift to go around the entire species, they kept it for themselves. So with this matter of vanity.

Consider, for a moment, the words which wise men have spoken on the subject. "That reverend vice, that grey iniquity, that father (note the gender) ruffian, that vanity in years," Shakespeare remarked. Likewise the Psalmist: "Every man (speaking generically, without doubt) at his best state is altogether vanity," or in other words, even at his best he cannot escape it. And then, of course, the most familiar of all: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Not "all feminine things are vanity," by any manner of means. The wisdom of the ages, from King David to Schopenhauer, constantly rings the changes on the theme.

What, then, is the relation between the vanity of men and their pursuit of this most costly of luxuries? It is simple, primal, fundamental, and has to do with their determination to feed their vanity at the same time they endeavor to conceal it. Pretending they are not vain, they clothe themselves in garments of uniform and ugly design, and then, by a process of elimination, demand that the women who are seen in their company must go so far to the other extreme as to strike an average. Denying that they are vain of public display, they pretend that all their ostentation is born of an unselfish desire to give pleasure to women. Insisting that they are not vain of what others think of them, they submit to the extortions of restaurants that charge fabulous prices, so they may be seen of all men, spending large sums of money in lavish entertaining. Why do they drink the most expensive wines, when they would much prefer Pilsener? Vanity. Why do they seat us in boxes at the theater, half the stage obscured to their view, when they would rather be in the pit? Vanity. Why does the man who, in his office, checks every invoice clear over to the cents column, pay his dinner bill without even ascertaining if the addition is correct? Vanity. So you have it in a word. The world's costliest luxury is the entertaining of women, and the motive thereof is vanity.

SORROW NAKED

By Byrne Marconnier

I SAT alone in the house with my Sorrow. In the room where I sat I had drawn the arras over the window. Although it was day without, it was dark in the room. My Sorrow, against the opposite wall, watched me silently. It was a gaunt, still thing, and from across the room it appeared much larger than myself. I hated and feared it. It was a tyrant to which I paid grudging toll.

I kept the arras drawn, because I thought, "It is hard enough to sit in the half light, and view my Sorrow. Its bones and hollows are hardly perceptible in the dusk. But if I should let the day in and see the hideous spectre naked in the full light of noon, I would be blinded by the horror and despair of it."

And so I sat with folded hands, and watched. When a few stray sunbeams crept around the edge of the arras, I hastily drew it closer. A bird came and sang outside my window, but I did not believe it, and I would not listen.

I do not know how long I staid thus. When I had first sat alone with my Sorrow, I had a desire for the sunlight. But I disciplined myself to for-

get, and I stilled the vague longings. It had come to pass now that I did not want the day. I had sat so long in the gloaming, and had become unused to the light. And I was afraid to see the ghost naked.

Then spoke my Sorrow, the spectre who had been so long silent—and I was startled by the sweetness of its voice.

"O man, why hast thou hid me here in shadows? Have I no right to the day? Long have I sat here, silent. And I have pitied you because you have pitied yourself. Draw back the arras. Admit the day."

But I answered: "No—no! I am afraid. Long have I sat here in the dusk. I can distinguish you but vaguely in the half light. But if I let in the day, I shall see you naked, and I shall be destroyed."

"Not so," came from across the room, and I was awed by the tenderness of the tone. "Not so. Have no fear. Unveil the casement."

A sudden wild hope seized me. I rushed to the window. I pulled back the arras. And lo! Where had sat my Sorrow was a fair, smiling girl, with shining eyes.



TWO reasons why I never go to the theatre: if the heroine does *not* attract me, I lose all sympathy with the play; if the heroine *does* attract me, I lose all sympathy with the hero.



THE TORTURERS

By Annette Wynne

THE torturers were gloating beside the new grave. They twisted their bodies and rolled on the ground in fiendish glee—a ghastly crew in the moonlight. They mocked at the new dead. Ambition, Aspiration, Daily-Struggle, Sense-of-Honor, Fear-of-Death, and a long roll of other fiends were there.

Leered Ambition: "He's having his first good sleep, I had my fun with him."

"Great sport—that tug of war," said Aspiration. "With our pulling we nearly pulled his soul apart."

Fear-of-Death pushed to the front and spoke next: "I had him fast in my clutches for a while, but then one day he turned around and stared at me, and called me, 'Liar'!"

"What a pity he sleeps so soundly," said Ambition. "Let us wake him. . . . Ho, there, sleeper, wake up. The world is crazy about your painting. Your poem—everyone is shouting about it. Wake up."

Then Aspiration tried: "Here I am whom you sought all these years. Come touch me, I will not elude you this time."

Only the shadows of the fiends shift-

ed. The moonlight streamed down upon a silent grave. The torturers were frantic with disappointment, and they grit their teeth in anger.

Then suddenly the graveyard gate swung back. One entered, tall, majestic, shining-white, with a fillet bound on its head. Whether man or woman none might say, for the garments were loose and floating in the wind. The figure was full of grace and beauty, but a closer look showed the same savagery that was in every face of the ugly crowd about the grave. The twisted dwarfs made obeisance, and murmured among themselves.

The figure stopped at the new grave, stooped over, and whispered only one word—"Mercedes." The earth heaved up, for the dead man had turned below, and a cry of agony came up. All the other dead in the churchyard heard and groaned, till the place was full of anguish.

The fiends threw themselves on their faces on the ground, and sprawling, cried: "Hail Arch-Torturer!" In the moonlight the bright letters of one word glittered on the fillet of the White One: *Love*.



NO woman loves the same man twice—not if he can help it.



THE BACHELOR AND THE BUBBLE

By Hermann Hagedorn

THE tragic comedy began with a visit of a bride and groom at Harry Shenton's pretty camp-on Moosehead Lake. Who they were does not matter. The girl was a cousin, or something of the sort, of Shenton's, and he had invited the pair to spend a week with him at the end of their honeymoon, to give them a chance to adjust their ways to the cynical world before plunging again into the midst of it.

The visit proved fatally delightful. The bride and groom behaved decidedly better than other brides and grooms Shenton had seen. They were demonstrative, but they never slipped treacherously off into darkness, or sighed rapturously or used baby-talk. On the contrary, time and again, they deliberately overthrew the plans he had made to give them a picnic by themselves on the farther shore while he stayed home; or home while he went on some wild-goose journey up or down the lake. They insisted with a firmness which he soon learned was real and not, as he half suspected at first, a social feint, that all pleasure parties must be parties of three. He demurred, he promised; and basely endeavored to circumvent the agreement. But the Admirable Pair were rock and the bride even declared that they would go home at once if he tried again to treat them like Coney Island spooners.

Shenton felt a little ashamed of himself at that remark, for it was evidently meant to accuse him of a lack of discrimination of which a man of forty should not be guilty. He protested no more, but dutifully and with growing delight attended the pair wherever they

stayed or went. He learned many things thereby. He learned things he had never imagined about the soul of man when woman rolls back the curtain; he learned even more about the soul of woman. The occasion gave him rare opportunities. His Delectable Couple were living, as it were, in midair, suspended for a fleeting moment above the actualities. Soon they would touch earth again. In a week they would be unpacking furniture and interviewing cooks. But now they were studying each other's curious and intricate souls. The souls were not really very curious and they were not at all intricate; but to these two, who were everyday man and woman, young and hitherto charmingly irresponsible and impatient of research, the soul of each seemed to the peering soul of the other to be a very maze of interwoven tangles.

Because they were on their honeymoon the tangles were, of course, ablaze with blossoms; but still, the tangles were there, bewildering and not without thorns. Shenton watched the explorations, amused at first, puzzled, pensive, increasingly interested. He began to look forward to the gleams of sudden delight, as vistas seemed to open now here, now there, to the eyes of the man or the woman; he felt a pang when he saw that one or the other had been unsuspectingly caught on a thorn. It occurred to him with growing force that beside these children of twenty and twenty-three, he, the staid man of forty, was an uneducated, frivolous babe in arms.

The Happy Pair departed down the lake one cool, blue morning. They

went, with Katahdin at their backs, rosy with blessings, out of the calm forest country back to the difficult, perturbing world. Shenton climbed the slope from his camp back to his cabin, feeling for the first time in his life the oppressive vastness and loneliness of the primeval woods. As the morning wore tediously to noon, and the afternoon laboriously to night, his depression deepened into gloom. The place seemed horribly empty, and as he sat before his fire that night he discovered with a shock that his life was as empty as the camp. The worldly success he could not deny no longer seemed important. It occurred to him suddenly that the law was an inhuman machine to serve, even though the service were intellectually stimulating and the rewards not inconsiderable. Clubs were a mockery, he told himself, the so-called pleasures of society a delusion. Why, when there were so many happily married men in the world, was it his lot to be dismally single? He endured the forsaken camp for three long, lonely days; then, on an impulse, packed his bags, locked his cabin door behind him, and journeyed back to Nassau Street.

The city was hot and bare of friends. The little work his firm had on hand had, at the beginning of summer, been distributed among the younger partners who commuted from points on Long Island and the Jersey coast, and no clients, old or new, came from distracted homes or unbalanced ledgers to quiet his restlessness with the tonic of intellectual combat. He haunted the lonely halls of the Harvard Club. They seemed to him huge and empty as chaos before the first day of Creation. Three successive evenings he dined there, hoping that fortune would throw some similarly marooned classmate in his way. The first evening he spent with a genially overflushed young aristocrat who was celebrating nothing in particular between one vacation and another. The next he spent with a weary instructor, worn-out with six weeks of Summer School, the third with a recent graduate on the verge of over-

turning the world with a new socialistic doctrine. Thereupon he took to the haven of the tired business man and sat through hour after hour of insufferably stupid syncope. When, after two weeks of this soul-killing existence, he received a note from an aunt whom he did not love very much, inviting him to spend a week-end at Quogue, he was certain that the saints had intervened in his behalf, and telegraphed his acceptance.

His depressed spirits rose as the train, leaving the barren wastes of East Brooklyn and Jamaica behind, entered the pleasanter wastes of sand and scrub oak, where cool breezes from the Atlantic blew through the open car-door. For no particular reason he was actually elated when he finally stepped off the train at Quogue. His aunt was waiting for him and he allowed himself to be embraced with greater tolerance than he had ever been able before to bring to that ordeal. Mrs. Applegate was only an aunt by marriage after all, and this slender tie, Shenton thought, had been sufficiently attenuated by the thirty years that had elapsed since his uncle's death to make demonstration of affection unnecessary, even if a second husband had not meanwhile reigned for twenty years and departed likewise. But Mrs. Applegate was not one to let relations forget their obligations when it suited her to recall them. She was a tall, well-featured, haughty lady whose rather faint, anæmic affections led a sort of firefly existence of sudden brightnesses and sudden extinctions. For the moment she was sure she was very fond of Harry Shenton, and was fluent in her efforts to make this evident.

Shenton gallantly cranked the tidy little runabout, and off they whirled past Payn's lumbering, overcrowded busses, down the road that runs straight south through the cool woods to the highway. The air was jubilantly fresh and full of the clean, thrilling smell of the sea. It woke unnumbered memories in Shenton's mind, things that he had not thought of for twenty years or more.

He had been a boy in Quogue, and the place was bound up with all that was perennially satisfying to his simple, clean, mundane, unexact being, the bathing, the sailing, the good friends, jolly, successful and unpretentious as himself. He thought of a dusk in June when he was sixteen and of a girl—long since married and buxom and settled down—whom he had kissed in the shadow of an ancient bit of wreckage that slanted up out of the loose sand. The memory made him feel romantic. He determined to visit that wreck.

Meanwhile Mrs. Applegate was talking, which was not unusual, for Mrs. Applegate loved to do so. There was fleeting mention of Shenton's long-departed uncle—that was inevitable—not more than a word or two, no gush, but merely enough to establish the fact that neither time nor other matters could efface the memory of that part of her life which linked her to the man now sitting beside her—a subtle form of flattery which always amused Shenton. There was talk of the weather, of the crowds, of the bathing, then, quite incidentally, a new name, Cecilia Forbes. Shenton pricked up his ears.

"Do help me give her a good time," Mrs. Applegate was saying. "She's not a spring chicken. She's well in the thirties, and the men hereabouts are either married or under age. The ruling crowd is eighteen and they treat Cecilia as though she had committed a crime. And I invited her and feel perfectly ashamed. I count on you to retrieve my reputation as a hostess. The poor dear is so nice and she has worked so hard this year—"

"Worked?" he asked.

"Yes. Slums. The old story. Had a suitor when she was twenty, and he died, and social service ever since. Such a waste. But the slums love her, which, I am told, is a rare tribute to her tact. She could have married a dozen different men. But she wouldn't. Now if you were only the marrying kind, Harry— But I know you are not. Don't worry." She laughed a gay little laugh that ended shrilly. "I have long given

up hope of you, though she is all sorts of a dear, so clever and so wonderfully efficient. She is a distant cousin of mine, you know. The efficiency in the family. I always used to tell your uncle that I didn't know what he'd have done without my efficiency."

Shenton groaned inwardly. Aunt Geraldine's efficiency was a bore known of old.

"My great-grandfather and Cecilia's grandfather were cousins," Mrs. Applegate went on. "You can work out the relationship yourself. She's clever. I don't know whether she was ever head of her class the way I used to be, but goodness is much more, isn't it? I'd be ashamed of being clever if I thought there wasn't a good heart behind it. And Cecilia is good. You'd never think so good and gentle a soul could be so efficient, but those qualities seem to go together in our family—"

Ad infinitum. Shenton, who remembered with what implacable determination Mrs. Applegate had endeavored for five long years, a decade or two ago, to ring his wedding bells for him, began to understand why he had been invited. His heart sank. The sea air lost its tang. But only for a moment. To his own utter amazement he heard himself, a second or two later, saying, "Tell me some more about her."

II

SHENTON found Cecilia Forbes decidedly pleasant. She was not particularly pretty in features, coloring or hair, nor unusually brilliant in conversation, but excellent company and rather interesting to look upon; taken all in all, most agreeable to have about. Her handshake was vigorous and her unmusical voice had notes that amusingly emphasized her unobtrusive but very genuine humor. She had a bad cold and her nose was red.

"I hope Mrs. Applegate warned you that you were going to spend the weekend with a fright," she remarked at supper.

He said the obvious thing, "She had no reason to."

"My, my! I thought you were such a wonderfully clever man," Cecilia murmured, shaking out a fresh handkerchief.

"Has Aunt Geraldine been romancing again?" asked Shenton quickly.

There was a moment's queer, electric silence. Mrs. Applegate smiled benignantly, and with sweet unconcern asked for the butter. But Harry and Cecilia exchanged glances in which amusement and despair were mingled. For Shenton's remark had disclosed to Cecilia that Mrs. Applegate had been romancing to Shenton about herself, as, earlier in the day, she had romanced to Cecilia concerning Shenton. Shenton cursed himself for his heavy-footed stupidity; but Cecilia, regarding him from the depths of her critical brown eyes, divined the curses and, deciding that Mr. Shenton was a simple soul and rather nice, remarked brazenly, to Mrs. Applegate's amazement and Shenton's perturbation:

"Forewarned is forearmed."

She said it very coolly, and no one would ever have guessed that away down deep she was actually mildly excited.

III

By the middle of the next morning, Shenton was wondering who had been meddling with his watch, for the hour hand seemed to be spinning around like an engine wheel that has slipped its belt. The weather was hot and clear, the ocean calm, with long, black rollers that came undulating from far away, rose, hesitated and broke, one after the other, with a peal like far thunder. For hours on Sunday morning the surf was crowded with black ant-like figures, the elder of the men and women, fat and lean, with the children, shouting and shrieking, in the milky swirl near shore. The younger folk beyond, diving through the combers as they broke or, with long strokes, breasting the swell to the bobbing barrels.

Mrs. Applegate, superbly robed and feathered, for she had been to church, sat in an arbor watching with inner satisfaction the progress Shenton and Cecilia Forbes were making through the heavy, even surf toward matrimony and the barrels. Cecilia was not one to let even a severe cold interfere with a swim. Shenton watched her strong, quiet strokes with approval. She did not seem to be exerting herself at all, a sure sign that she really felt at home in the water. They talked as they swam, telling each other certain outstanding facts in their lives without emphasizing the loneliness which happened at the moment to be the deepest fact in both. Cecilia spoke of the death of her parents and of the work she had chosen; in jerky sentences between strokes she spoke. Shenton told of college, of the law, of Nassau Street and Maine. They clung to the rope that connected the outer barrels and revealed to each other the matters that were important enough for conversation and not important enough for silence. Thus, needless to say, Shenton said nothing of his vague restlessness ever since The Delectable Pair's departure from his camp; and Cecilia nothing of the sudden consciousness of the futility of philanthropy, which had brought the weariness Mrs. Applegate had falsely attributed to overwork. Some day, not improbably, they might speak even of these. For the present, they bobbed up and down on the swells and discussed obvious things.

The great open sea beyond the barrels tempted them and they struck out once more, swimming with slow, easy strokes, out and farther out until the shouts of the bathers came to them only faintly and at intervals between the long-drawn, coal-cart thunder of the breakers. Cecilia laid her hands behind her head and floated.

"What peace! What wonderfully satisfying quiet!" she murmured. "Inside and out. I feel like a baby in a cradle with a blue canopy overhead and a wonderfully loving foot on the rocker. That is the argument between me

and the slums. Day in, day out, I have to pose as the stern parent, when actually I am just a child myself, wanting a certain amount of scolding and motherly advice like the rest. No one, I think, should ever cease keeping the attitude of a child toward someone, just as no child should ever be considered too young to be someone's guardian and protector, if only a kitten's. We should live in two directions to keep our balance between self-reliance and humility."

"You make me feel very unbalanced," Shenton answered. "I have neither parent nor child."

"You have the law, which may be both."

"Yes," Shenton mused dubiously. "You respect the law, and sometimes, if it's ancient enough, you revere it, and now and then you take it by the ear and tell it to do as you say. But there's precious little filial affection or parental coddling you get from it."

They were silent for a minute or more while they swam fifty yards nearer Patagonia. "I think that people are meant to swim more than they do," said Cecilia at last. "It gives one such a consciousness of eternity to be out beyond one's depth. And in our daily lives we so carefully dodge eternity, until some day we turn a corner and come face to face with her, and faint away just because we're so unaccustomed to the look of her austere, cool eyes."

Shenton did not attempt to answer her, although he, too, felt a thrill of his own at this intimate companionship away from the chit-chat of the crowds. There was something elemental about it. Life seemed suddenly deeper, richer in every sense.

"I suppose we're out a quarter of a mile," Cecilia murmured. "I wonder if Mrs. Applegate is having fits."

Shenton rose as high as he could on the next swell to see if he could discern Mrs. Applegate in the arbor where they had left her. A breaking wave farther impeded his view.

"A little worry won't hurt Aunt Geraldine," he remarked. "I rather think

she deserves it." He turned again to his companion and gave a cry. Cecilia had disappeared. He had heard no shout from her, no call for help. He turned from left to right in horror, calling out. It seemed to him that he heard her reply faintly, and he plunged over the oncoming swell into the trough. Thirty feet out he saw her. She was floating quietly, quite unconscious of the fact that she was being swept with appalling swiftness out to sea. But he knew the ways of Quogue currents, and he saw the brownish eddy about her. She had been caught in a sea-puss, outward bound at top-speed. He saw her suddenly struggle and knew that she realized her peril.

"East or west," he shouted. "To the side! Don't try for shore. Try left or right."

He knew that she heard for he saw her strike out toward the east. But her strength was failing, and the eddy was dragging her out with amazing speed. It took all his strength to reach her.

"Save yourself," she cried. "I'll be all right. I'd as lief go this way—as any other. Please, please, I mean it."

"Hands on my shoulders!" he cried back.

"Don't be an idiot," she said, sputtering. "Don't waste a perfectly good life."

"Do as you're told," he ordered.

She relaxed without further debate and did as he commanded. A short, fierce struggle carried them to safety.

"Here we are!" he cried. "You're out of it. Now take it easy. That was a sea-puss. There it goes—that little brown whirlpool. Looks lonely without you, doesn't it? Easy now. Get rested. Float if you can." He had little breath to waste on talk, but he was suddenly amazingly happy and he panted out the words because joy would not let him be silent. Cecilia gave him a look but no words in answer. He grew silent as he thought of all the things that look said.

Slowly and without speech they made their way shoreward.

IV

SHENTON returned to his office on Monday thoroughly conscious that something amazing had happened to him. There was nothing for him to do at the office except smoke and bother the junior partners, but he found greater pleasure in these occupations than usual, and so genial was his manner that the junior partners did not seem to object to his interruptions.

"What's got into Shenton?" remarked Farnsworth, a youngster just out of law school. "He acts as though he had a bun on."

There was some truth in this statement. Shenton was, indeed, mildly intoxicated by the deep draught of the wine of romance he had quaffed. The whole affair was so extraordinarily romantic, the long swim, the sudden peril, the moment of horror, the struggle, face to face with death, the slow drift home with his heart shouting as it had not shouted for twenty years, the quiet afternoon on the beach, melting into an incredible sunset of flaming scarlet fading into shell pink against lavender, blue and green; the starlit evening on the dunes with the deep silence of understanding between them, made possible by their great adventure together—all these things had affected the unemotional Shenton as a glass of patent medicine stirs a teetotalling deacon—the world looked very rosy and he did not exactly know why. He knew only this. He was going to Quogue again next week-end.

He went. Cecilia, who had learnt to run the car, met him herself at the station, and did not conceal her pleasure at seeing him. She liked Shenton without question. Besides, he had saved her life. The week-end passed with appalling rapidity, under the careful auspices of Mrs. Applegate. There were hours on hours at the beach, with only the stars to listen; there were more long swims. Shenton decided to spend the rest of the summer in Quogue, and was dismayed when he heard that Mrs. Applegate had rented her house to a

honeymoon couple for September first. This was August 26th. There was only one thing to be done. Mrs. Applegate and Cecilia must come to his camp in Maine. Mrs. Applegate remarked that the suggestion was thrilling, and accepted at once, as Shenton had known she would. But Cecilia gave an evasive answer and deftly changed the subject. Shenton had the grace not to press the matter at the moment, and she blessed him for that, though she knew he would repeat the invitation before he departed in the morning. That night, after they had all retired, she softly crept out of the house and sought the advice of the sea. The cottage was situated on the dunes, not a hundred feet from high-water mark, and she did not have far to go. The tide was at full ebb. There was no surf, and the gentle boom of the foot-high breakers, followed by the low swish of the white waters over the pebbles, was all the sound there was. She walked up and down—a hundred yards east, a hundred yards west—a shadowy figure of softly flowing garments against the pale-edged blackness of the sea.

She was thinking of Shenton, of course, and of the invitation to Maine and all it portended. She knew that if she accepted, she must accept likewise another invitation which, unless all signs failed, would follow presently on the wake of this. The thought thrilled her unexpectedly. She admitted to herself that she seemed to be in love with Harry Shenton, and felt a wave of rejoicing run through her. She had always honestly desired to fall in love again ever since the grief of her girlhood lover's death had, in the bright light of busy life, begun to fade into the beautiful, luminous and unreal memory which it ever would remain. She knew she could never love anyone again as she had loved that boy of nineteen, but after all there were more ways than one of loving a man. Unfortunately, not one of the once large but now diminished army of her suitors could suggest any way that mated with her inclinations; not one, until the ad-

vent of Shenton. She knew that Shenton was neither handsome nor unusually brilliant, but she told herself that she had liked him from the first. The fact that he was not the paragon that Mrs. Applegate had painted him pleased her, and after weeks of so-called conversation with the college youths, who fluttered about the beach and the club, whither Mrs. Applegate had insisted on dragging her, she had been impressed by the firm outline of the ideas he expressed and the obviously solid, well-nourished and well-trained mind that underlay them. She saw clearly the reasons for his success as a lawyer; she saw, too, that Mrs. Applegate's prophecy concerning a judicial career was well founded. She analyzed her own feelings. Gratitude loomed large. He had risked his life for hers—that fact was uppermost in her mind, but about it clung the warm memories of the long, exultant swim out and the long, quiet drift back, the security she had felt in his presence ever since, the keen pleasure at his coming, the regret at his departure. Undoubtedly she was in love, quietly, peacefully in love, but in love, without doubt. The future looked clear and sunlit. She knew that she would make a satisfactory wife and mother. She knew it as surely as she knew that she was plain of face; for she was as free from meaningless self-distrust as she was of vanity. How wonderful that Harry Shenton had come just at the moment when she seemed to need him most; at the moment when she had discovered the futility of her work and her need of a more specific object of affection than a slum. It did not occur to her that possibly her previous discouragement might have something to do with her present emotion. Like most sincerely religious people, she disregarded probable psychological or physiological causes and gave Providence credit for what appeared to her so gracious a miracle. She returned slowly to her room and lay awake for hours, day-dreaming like a girl of seventeen, to the reiterant music of the surf.

Shenton met her next morning at the foot of the stairs as she came down to breakfast. Mrs. Applegate was looking after the cereal, and they were alone.

"Well," said Shenton as unconcernedly as he could, "do we meet at Moosehead next Saturday?"

For all his unconcern, Cecilia received the impression that Shenton had thought of nothing but Maine for the last twelve hours. That was a bit disconcerting, and she hesitated a moment.

"Do you really want us?" she asked. "I'm an awful gawk in the woods. I'm the kind that gets sprained ankles ten miles from camp and that sort of thing."

"I want you very much," he answered with so much seriousness that she laughed outright.

"On your head be it then," she cried gaily. "I'm game."

Mrs. Applegate entered, said good morning and rang for the cereal, smiling benignantly; for she had seen to it that the kitchen door was not entirely shut.

V

CECILIA came to Moosehead with Mrs. Applegate. She came, she saw—and then there was a hitch. The thing amused her at first, then puzzled her, for the second invitation did not follow on the heels of the first with the celerity she had led herself to expect. In the solitude of her own room she laughed softly at herself. Mrs. Applegate, however, did not laugh. Her glance of calm approval changed to a look of quizzical impatience. What was happening that she did not observe? Nothing was happening. That was the main trouble. And if she had questioned Cecilia or Shenton neither would have been able to enlighten her.

A week of heavenly autumn weather passed by. There were canoe trips up and down the lake, canoe trips to the farther shore, canoe trips for purposes of fishing, canoe trips with picnic lunches and suppers, canoe trips simple

and unadorned. There was calm water and there was storm, there were soft and romantic twilights, there was a moon, beginning timidly in a gold crescent over purple woods, and waxing night by night. Nothing seemed to avail. Mrs. Applegate began to be annoyed.

If Cecilia and Mrs. Applegate were puzzled, so was Shenton; he was possibly more puzzled than either. He knew what Cecilia's acceptance of his invitation meant, and he had planned to the last detail the time, the place, the very words of proposal. They would go out in the canoe after supper the day she came and as the dusk slowly fell, with the evening calls of the birds roundabout, he would ask her to marry him. The thing would be as romantic as the rest of their acquaintance had been. They took the canoe trip that evening as he had arranged, the lake was like a mirror, the birds were all there, but for some reason or other Cecilia was in a hilarious, irresponsible mood that made serious talk impossible. Perhaps she had divined the deliberate setting of the stage and was slightly nervous.

"What romantic birds you have here," she cried. "And what a romantic moon! If we ever achieve a socialistic state, I'm sure there'll be a curfew law to keep all young women under roof and thoroughly chaperoned when the moon is out. It seems such an obvious precaution."

Shenton felt the words grate on him like the sound of a file on a saw. For the evening the edge was off the romance.

He lay awake a good part of the night planning for the next attack. He was annoyed at himself for his tactlessness in seeking to approach the great subject on the very evening of Cecilia's arrival, before she had had time to rest from the day and night journey. He admired, moreover, the way in which she had gracefully spiked his guns, and vowed that he would not again let consideration of the obvious romance of birds and sunsets tarnish the pro-

founder romance of his devotion. Before morning dawned he decided that Cecilia must think him a good deal of a fool. That depressed him. Cecilia would never marry anyone she could not respect.

Cecilia, meanwhile, was also thinking, not at all displeased with herself for the deft way in which she had knocked the background out of Shenton's little sentimental stage-set. She decided that she was old enough to be wooed in fairly matter-of-fact fashion. After all, when people were forty or rapidly approaching it they must, in mere decent deference to experience and observation, make their marriage contract somewhat more cold-bloodedly than a boy and girl of twenty. Indeed, she mused, that was one of the joys of middle age, that, what life lost in warmth and color, it gained twice over in definiteness of outline. She did not like blurs. With this idea emphatic in her mind she started to re-examine her own emotions.

Shenton did not try again to draw twilight and the birds into his service. If Cecilia insisted on being matter of fact, he, too, would be; and he recast the words of proposal to fit the new conditions. He found it easy enough to frame the sentences, but amazingly hard to pronounce them.

He planned that the fatal interview should run something like this:

BACKGROUND: *Gray sky. Rocks. Choppy waters. If possible a slight drizzle. Cecilia somewhat soaked and sniffing slightly with a return of the cold that always made her nose red. Then a conversation on this order:*

HARRY: Fine weather for ducks! Are you sorry you came?

CECILIA: No, indeed. I like rain, though it doesn't enhance my beauty.

HARRY: I like red noses.

CECILIA: How unromantic of you!

HARRY: Well, I'm not eighteen.

CECILIA: I'm thirty-five. How old are you?

HARRY: Forty, thank you. If we

were to get married our combined ages would be seventy-five.

Pause.

CECILIA: My clothes are drenched. I'll really have to go and hang myself in front of the fire to dry.

HARRY: Come along, I'll carry the duds. That coat of yours is pretty well ruined. Yes, you carry the fish. You caught most of them. By the way, do I understand that you accept my invitation to matrimony?

CECILIA: If you insist. Oh, by the way, do you prefer your fish boiled or fried?

Each morning Shenton determined to launch his matter-of-fact proposal before the day was done and each evening he metaphorically kicked himself for his failure to do so. There were a dozen times each day when the calm, cool beauty roundabout hushed them both and seemed to wrap them in veils on veils of fragrant romance, and a dozen times a day Cecilia expected him to speak. But he persisted in following the lead Cecilia had given him the first evening; for she should not again think him a sentimental fool. Cecilia watched him, puzzled, and ever more and more amused.

The two weeks' visit grew to a close. Cecilia was well over her cold, with more strength in her body and color in her cheeks than she had had for years. Shenton, on the other hand, looked worn, and Mrs. Applegate was irritable and subject to headaches.

On the morning of the day preceding their departure, Mrs. Applegate finally spoke her mind. Shenton was safe in the boathouse packing the canoe for a last picnic.

"Cecilia," she said, not hiding her exasperation, "are you engaged to my nephew, or are you not?"

"I am not—cross my heart."

"Then I wish you would explain. Wasn't it more or less understood when you came up here with me that you were about to become engaged to him?"

"I really don't know what was in Mr. Shenton's mind, Mrs. Applegate."

"But wasn't it in yours?"

"Do you know," remarked Cecilia, as though the idea had just occurred to her, "come to think of it, I think it was."

The smile with which she accompanied this statement was delightfully carefree, and exasperated Mrs. Applegate all the more.

"Then why, in heaven's name, my dear child," exclaimed the lady, "do you persist in refusing him?"

Cecilia laughed softly, but did not speak at once, for the little laugh grew until her shoulders shook. "My dear," she cried at last with a look of comical despair, "he hasn't asked me."

If Mrs. Applegate had been a man she would have exclaimed that, well, she was *damned*. As it was, she looked it. Ten minutes later, when Shenton came up to inform them that everything was shipshape for the start, neither her face nor her usually placid spirit had resumed its normal aspect.

"I have a headache, and I hate a canoe anyway," she remarked irritably. "I don't suppose a moose will kidnap me if I stay here alone, and God knows there is nothing except moose within ten miles. I *shall* be glad to get back to civilization."

Cecilia turned her face away while she suppressed a bit of the laughter that seemed to possess her being these ridiculous days. But Shenton merely looked surprised and worried and grim.

VI

THEY had their luncheon in a little sandy cove at the farther side of the lake, over which ancient hemlocks stood guard. The sky was gray and a cool wind was blowing down the lake and rustling the fir-branches mournfully. It was a typical autumn noon, with the pathos of summer's end in the air. The fire they built was more than an accessory of romance. They fed it assiduously.

Shenton pulled at his pipe, audibly. "I'm sorry you're going to-morrow," he began.

"It's been a wonderful experience," she answered. "I feel like a new being. It's set me up for years."

"Do you really mean that?" he asked, gratefully.

Their eyes met.

"Indeed, I do," she said warmly.

"I'm extraordinarily glad of that," he answered.

There was a minute or two of silence between them. Cecilia heard his pipe bubbling, and deducing agitation, wondered what was coming next.

"I'm enormously glad you had a good time," he repeated at last, somewhat lamely.

"I think I've had the best time I've ever had anywhere," she answered softly, looking down and playing with the sand. It was an outrageous piece of coquetry. She knew that, and deliberately accentuated the effect with all the subtle shading of tone and pose at her command. She told herself that she would give five years of life to see Shenton's face. She divined that it was grimmer than before. At last, scarcely lifting her head, she slowly raised her eyelids and gazed with large eyes into Shenton's. Something inside her clapped hands with impish glee. Shenton was emphatically grim with worry.

Cecilia did not relent. "I have every reason to be very grateful to you," she went on with a carefully premeditated blend of lightness and sentimentality. "First, you fished me out of the water, and then you invited me up here. You've made a new person of me with this fortnight of Maine air. You've given me new nerve. Of course, I'm grateful."

"Pshaw!" he exclaimed, kicking at a log that had fallen from the fire. "All that doesn't amount to a hill o' beans."

"It does to me," she said softly, impelled to grin.

He flushed. "I didn't mean it that way," he answered quickly. "Of course, it's enormously important to me that I should have been able to be of some assistance to you—if it really was assistance. There's no use trying

to tell you what these weeks have meant to me."

She took to playing with the sand again. "I'm so glad," she whispered, studying a handful of the tiny grains, "I'm so glad."

There was another long silence, during which Cecilia poured sand slowly and dreamily from hand to hand, relentlessly waiting. Shenton studied her. He saw expectation written in the downcast eyes and sentimental pose, and in what seemed to him the speechlessness transcending speech. He liked the face, he assured himself, and the brain behind it was a corker. Why in time this amazing reluctance to speak the fatal words?

"Will you marry me, Miss Forbes?" he said, swiftly, plunging somewhat as a man throws himself from a tower, not because he wants to, but because the desperate and fatal thing seems suddenly the one inevitable thing to do.

Inwardly, Cecilia gave a sigh of relief. "At last!" she murmured to herself. But none of this was on the surface. She looked up with all the teasing coquetry gone. "Dear, silly man, of course I won't," she said.

His brow clouded, but Cecilia vowed to herself that there was relief in the depths of his eyes. "Why, I thought," he said softly. "I thought you might."

She looked at him with a faint, friendly, wistful smile. "I thought I might myself," she said. "In fact, I planned quite definitely to do so." The smile grew a little, and ceased to be wistful. "Is it perfectly outrageous of me to change my mind?"

"No, no, of course not," he answered quickly. "That has always been a woman's privilege."

"Don't men ever change their minds?" she asked after a little pause, with a deliberation that frightened her victim.

"Oh, yes, sometimes, some men," he answered vaguely, not daring quite to meet her eyes.

"Haven't you ever changed your mind?" she persisted without mercy.

Shenton looked at her for what

seemed to Cecilia a rather long time. Then he held out his hand. "I think," he said, with a slow grin, "we might as well shake."

They shook hands firmly over sardine cans and unwashed teacups, both grinning a little sheepishly.

"Funny, wasn't it?" he said.

"And I am thirty-five," she murmured. "And you?"

"Forty," he answered gravely.

"No fools like old fools," said Cecilia,

playing with the sand again. "Wasn't it a blessing we found out in time."

Shenton was staring miles out over the gray, troubled waters. "I don't know," he said. "I may be a horrible dare-devil, but I can't help wishing we hadn't."

Cecilia did not answer. Perhaps she was merely tactful, perhaps there were other reasons. But for a long time she, too, sat staring in silence over the gray, troubled waters.



AS ANY LITTLE GIRL

By Lucie Lacoste

I AM just as jealous as any little girl—

I write your name all over the beach and let the tide come in and wash it away in order to write it over again.

I count each star and give them each as name one of your qualities.

I see your profile against the sky in each golden-lined cloud—

I am just as jealous as any little girl!

If I see you smile on anyone I weep with the passion of a tropical storm.

I am just as jealous as any little girl!



THE public requires that its dramatic villains be tastefully dressed. That is why they are to the public, in the malice of its envy, villains.



WHEN a man says that all women are vampires it simply means that some woman has laughed at him.



LOVE is a paradise enclosed in a woman.

STEPHEN PHILLIPS AND MOTHER GOOSE RE-WRITE "OLD KING COLE"

By Louis Untermeyer

HE lived, an ancient and senescent king,
Long after Jupiter had loosed his bolts;
After grey Dis had locked her awful doors
And high Olympus crumbled into dust.
Merry he was, a blithe and genial soul;
Happy as Dionysus and as fond
Of games and dances as that smiling god.
Often he called, full loudly, for his bowl,
A bowl more vast than ever Bacchus owned;
Or e'er Silenus dipped into and held
For tipsy Nymphs or Thyiades to quaff.
Then called he for his pipe—not for the reed
Fashioned by Pan to ease his futile love
Of Syrinx trembling at the river-bank;
Not for the simple pipe that Paris played
When he was shepherding on Idas' hill;
But such a pipe that flamed and smoked as though
'Twere Ilium that burned.

And fiddlers three
He bellowed for—musicians bland of touch
As Orpheus when he swept his singing lute
Amid the ancient silences and stars;
Or Marsyas when he brought the roseate blush
To Fair Aurora's cheeks, and dreamy birds
Amid the boundless blue sang sweeter than
The Muses choring on Parnassus' slope.
Thus he sat, bosomed in Olympian calm,
And drank a mirth deep as Pierian founts;
Till laughter touched the pity of the Fates,
And Grief sank weeping in the stygian night.



THERE are two ways of being interesting to women. One is being flattering,
and the other is being marriageable.



AT NIGHT ALL CATS ARE GRAY

By Robert Garland

PERSONS IN THE PLAY

THE MAN (*Young, handsome, gentlemanly.*)
THE WOMAN (*Young and, of course, beautiful.*)
THE HUSBAND (*Oldish, well-dressed, unassuming.*)
THE BOBBY (*A regular uniformed policeman.*)
PERIOD—*The Present.*
PLACE—*London.*

THE scene shows the smoking-room in the home of the Honorable Philip Worthingham. In the centre of the stage is a large table on which are an unlighted electric reading lamp, books, periodicals, *The Times*, *The Daily Mirror*, a bowl of flowers, a handsome silver cigarette box, a tray containing siphons, whiskey and glasses, and the usual telephone. Halving the rear wall is a large French window with heavy curtains, partly drawn. On either side of the window is a cabinet,—one filled with jeweled watches on glass shelves, the other containing precious stones and various curios. These cabinets are locked; no keys are in the doors. At extreme left is a door opening on a corridor. An open fire glows at extreme right, beyond which is another door. Before the fire is a large comfortable couch. The fire furnishes the only light in the room at the rise of curtain.

The MAN is discovered seated facing the audience, between couch and fire, in a high back chair that completely hides him from the French window. He is in evening clothes, and is gazing into the fire. He makes no move. Shortly after rise of curtain a light from a pocket flash-light is seen playing on the French window. Beyond the window is glimpsed a woman's form. THE MAN, to all appearances, does not notice the lantern's flash, and THE WOMAN can not see the man. After fumbling with the latch she succeeds in forcing open the window, and, immediately, a loud bell begins to ring. THE WOMAN, who has now entered the room, gives a cry of surprise as THE MAN jumps to his feet. THE MAN presses a button, which lights the table lamp as well as a burner on either side of the fireplace, and, without a word, crosses to right side of French window and turns a switch. The bell stops ringing. THE WOMAN stands quite still within the room near the window, pulling nervously at her gloves which she carries in her hands. She wears quiet but expensive evening clothes, and many jewels. At her waist are two or three crimson roses. Over her bared shoulders an opera-cloak is thrown. THE MAN faces the WOMAN. She is the first to speak.

WOMAN

My God, how you frightened me.

MAN

I'm sorry, but—

WOMAN

(Commandingly.) Draw the curtains.

MAN

Really—I—I don't quite understand.

WOMAN

Draw the curtains. That's plain enough, isn't it?

MAN

It's quite nice English, but—

WOMAN

Quickly. He's following me.

MAN

I beg your pardon, I'd like to—

WOMAN

Please. Please do as I say. It means everything to me.

(He closes the window, then draws the curtains.)

Thank you.

MAN

I can't say whether you're welcome or not, as I don't know why I'm hiding you.

WOMAN

And I don't particularly care. Just do as I say.

MAN

Well, I've done as you said. We always do—in the end.

WOMAN

May I sit down? I'm trembling like a leaf.

MAN

Pray do. Are you cold?

WOMAN

How could I be cold when nervous as a kitten?

MAN

I really don't know enough about cats to know if nervous kittens get cold or not.

WOMAN

What was that bell?

MAN

The bell? Oh! the burglar alarm.

WOMAN

(Gaining self control.) How interesting.

MAN

Some people find it so.

WOMAN

Yes?

MAN

I've no idea who you are, but as you're here let me help you with your cloak.

WOMAN

(Rising.) Thank you.
(He removes her cloak.)

MAN

You're wonderful, standing there in the lamp-light.

(He places cloak on chair.)

Are you in the habit of popping in on people in this way?

WOMAN

Don't be foolish. Tell me about your alarm. It gave me a fearful fright. Being a woman, what frightens me interests me deeply.

MAN

It's a little patent of my own, and I'm a bit proud of it on that account. It protects my jewels and curios. They are all I have to interest me, so I guard them as I would my wife—if I had one.

(He waves his hand in the direction of the cabinets. She moves to a position before the nearer one.)

WOMAN

Ahhhhh!

MAN

They are alluring, aren't they?

WOMAN

They're very beautiful, and oh what a lot of them!

MAN

I'm awfully glad you like them. I fancy them tremendously.

WOMAN

(Returning.) I adore jewels.

MAN

You have many beautiful ones yourself.

WOMAN

Yes.

(After a slight pause she turns and comes toward him.)

Do you think me entirely mad?

MAN

Not entirely.

WOMAN

That's something to be thankful for.

MAN

I think you exceedingly foolish.

WOMAN

Foolish?

MAN

Suppose I hadn't been one of your own kind.

WOMAN

You're the Honorable Philip Worthingham, aren't you?

MAN

Suppose I am. I've not met you before, have I? It seems to me I'd have remembered it.

WOMAN

Thank you.

MAN

Well?

WOMAN

To bring the mysterious matter to a commonplace plane, I went to school with your sister at Oldingham. She had told me many times how straight and decent you were, how honest you—

MAN

It sounds like a recommendation for a butler; but please go on.

WOMAN

If you're going to make fun of me—

MAN

I'd never dream of such a thing.

WOMAN

When trouble came I remembered what your sister said, and thought of you.

MAN

(Slightly amused.) Oh! you thought of me.

WOMAN

I turned to you. My womanly intuition guided me.

MAN

(Bowing.) I thank your intuition.

WOMAN

What are we going to do?

MAN

That's just it; what *are* we going to do? You're what the dramatists term a maiden in distress. I am at your service. According to all the plays I have ever seen, it would seem to be your move.

WOMAN

You have been most kind.

MAN

Even a second-class hero in a third rate play would know exactly what to do. I am at a loss. What would you have me do?

WOMAN

I don't know. Really I don't. But please don't leave me. Don't desert me now.

MAN

I'll not leave you so long as you're in need of me. Tell me what you'd have me do. I'll do it, never fear.

WOMAN

You're going to make an excellent hero.

MAN

God forbid. I trust my sense of humor is far too strong to permit such a catastrophe. My chief claim to the admiration of your sex is that I "dance divinely."

WOMAN

(*Alluringly.*) I should love to dance with you, Sir Knight. Soft lights. A hidden orchestra. "Amoureuse." And you.

MAN

Don't. Please don't. I can't stand the thought. My life has made me horribly romantic. Let's get to business. I suppose the first thing I should do is offer you a glass of wine. (*He goes to the table, pours out a glass of wine.*) This'll buck you up tremendously.

WOMAN

(*Smiling, wine-glass in hand.*) Thank you.

MAN

It's rather good old port.

WOMAN

(*Testing it.*) Ah! I see you're a judge of wine as well as of jewels. I wonder if your knowledge extends to women.

MAN

We shall see.

WOMAN

(*Suddenly businesslike.*) I must explain my actions as quickly as I can. It is growing late.

MAN

Late? Not at all. Plays of this kind never begin till midnight.

WOMAN

This one will. Forgive my incoherence. I'm naturally embarrassed. I don't do this sort of thing every night, you know.

MAN

For the first time you astonish me.

WOMAN

Come. Sit beside me.

MAN

That *will* be a treat.
(*He sits beside her.*)

WOMAN

(*Smiling vaguely.*) It's the same time-worn tale. I was young, ambitious—

MAN

(*Half rising.*) Shall I put the "Spring Song" on the gramophone?

WOMAN

(*Detaining him.*) Please be serious, or I shall go away.

MAN

Oh, don't do that. I shall be as serious as Bernard Shaw.

WOMAN

I was young, ambitious for worldly success. He was rich, and old. We married.

MAN

Married?

WOMAN

(*Softly.*) Yes.

MAN

(*Pointing to her left hand.*) Where's your wedding ring?

WOMAN

I threw it away.

MAN

Why?

WOMAN

(*Dully.*) He struck me. I left the house; found a cab. Then I thought of you. As I knew almost no one in London, I came here, relying on my friendship for your sister to plead my cause. I fancied I heard my husband following in the motor, so I ran across the lawn. And—and here we are.

MAN

Yes. Here we are. I suppose you have no parents.

WOMAN

Maidens in distress never have.

MAN

(*Rising.*) You're a brick, and no mistake. What an absurd creature your husband must be! Men don't strike women any more, they're afraid to nowadays. His part must be rewritten.

WOMAN

My husband is old. He is not a modern man. He's a brute.

MAN

But, my dear woman, you married him.

WOMAN

That's what I'm always told. A trouble is no less real because you bring it on yourself. I was young, from a small provincial town, poor and tired of the narrow life. He was wealthy, so I—

MAN

You *are* petering out as a heroine. You should say that you sacrificed yourself to help your old father; there should have been a mortgage on the farm, or some such nonsense. (*Suddenly.*) Would you mind if I asked your name?

WOMAN

For the time being you may call me—"Drusilla."

MAN

(*Smiling.*) Thank you.

WOMAN

Thank you—what?

MAN

Thank you—Drusilla.

WOMAN

(*Looking about the room.*) Oh! I know I'm going to like it here.

MAN

That's all very well, and I'd be charmed to have you, but I'm afraid I shall have to send you home.

WOMAN

Oh! you wouldn't do that.

MAN

You seem to be mistaken about your husband's pursuit, and the wise thing for you to do is to get back quickly. He will probably never know that you've been gone. Anyhow, they always *do* go back, you know.

WOMAN

Send me home? To him?

MAN

Yes. To your husband.

WOMAN

(*Tears in her voice.*) I can't go back to him, I can't. He'd never forgive me, never. I—I hate the very sight of him. Here is where I want to stay. You've been so good, so kind to me.

(*She sinks into a chair beside the table.*)

MAN

(*Alarmed.*) Good heavens, woman, you can't stay on here. What would I do with a woman in the house? I'd just as soon have a camel. I must draw the line somewhere. You're married—

WOMAN

I am married in name only.

MAN

My dear Drusilla, that speech was cut years ago. And do pull yourself together. You *must* go home to your husband, whatever his name may be.

WOMAN

(*Fiercely.*) Never.

MAN

(*Forcibly.*) Yes. Mister Drusilla awaits you.

AT NIGHT ALL CATS ARE GRAY

WOMAN

Let him wait. I've thrown my wedding ring away. It can never be recovered.

MAN

You should repeat the word "never." It can never be recovered, never.

WOMAN

(*Obligingly.*) Never. So, you see, he is no longer my husband.

MAN

Oh, woman, woman, thy name is logic! You puncture a painting, hoping for the vote. You throw your ring away, and you are free. Your reasoning is delicious. (The WOMAN begins to cry softly.) This foolishness has got to stop. You may have thrown your ring away, but your husband has the marriage certificate. Even such a beautiful heroine as you, my lady, should know that a marriage is not unmade by tossing a ring into a handy snowdrift. There'd be wedding-rings all over the place if this were so. If Maeterlinck couldn't get away with it in a play, we can't. So, my dear, you're going home.

WOMAN

I can't go back to him. I can't.

MAN

(*Firmly.*) You can. And what's more, you will. Anyway, you're going away from here. I can't have you crying all over the place, you'll spoil things. Please don't cry. Please. Please be quiet, like a good girl.

(The WOMAN cries softly for a moment, while the MAN walks nervously up and down. Suddenly the door bell rings. She ceases crying at once, jumps to her feet. He stands perfectly still.

WOMAN

It's he.

MAN

Who?

WOMAN

My husband.

MAN

How do you know?

WOMAN

Oh, how does one know anything?

MAN

Absurd. Perfectly absurd. Things like this don't really happen. You'll wake up in a moment. Man's rooms. Midnight. Beautiful married woman. Man in evening dress. Husband at door. Even Pinero put the situation into the dramatic discard years ago. It can't be true—

WOMAN

You'll know whether it's true or not when that husband of mine gets in this room.

(The bell continues to ring. There is a knocking upon a distant door. The WOMAN makes for the door at Right.)

Let me hide. Let me hide in here.

MAN

(Catching her wrist.) No you don't. No—you—don't. What do you think you're playing? Lady Teasle?

WOMAN

(Struggling.) Unhand me, sir!

MAN

Oh! Oh!

WOMAN

I mean, let me go. Please let me go.

MAN

That's better. Why can't you be original? Even in melodramas they don't hide in anterooms any more. And "unhand me, sir," is positively criminal. You'll stay exactly where you are. Who knows, it may not be your husband, after all.

(He leaves the room by door at left. The WOMAN calmly rearranges her hair before a mirror, and puts a little powder on her nose. She seems slightly amused. As voices are heard without she seats herself upon the couch before the fire, carefully arranging her gown.

The MAN enters, bringing the HUSBAND with him. The HUSBAND is quite an elderly man of distinguished bearing, rather inclined to stoutness. A monocle, attached to a ribbon, is in his eye. He carries a stick, and is smartly dressed in evening clothes. He carries a fur coat over his arm.)

HUSBAND

(Bowing as he enters.) I thank you, sir.

MAN

Is this the lady for whom you're searching?

HUSBAND

Yes. *(He crosses to where the WOMAN sits.)* Drusilla, I have come to take you home.

WOMAN

(Unmoved.) I'll not go. I have no home, now.

HUSBAND

(Slowly, as if to a child.) My home is yours, as it will ever be. I am sorry for what I did in silly anger, very sorry. Forgive me, even if you can't forget.

WOMAN

No.

HUSBAND

(A catch in his voice.) Drusilla—my—our motor is at the door.

(There is a little pause.)

(The HUSBAND turns to the MAN.)

I regret this intrusion even more than you. My wife and I had a slight misunderstanding after dinner this evening and she, in a moment of youthful excitement, left the house and called a cab. I followed in the motor. I hesitated quite a while before ringing your bell.

MAN

(Vaguely.) Yes?

HUSBAND

Where you come into the situation I have no desire to learn. I worship my wife, sir, and those I love, I trust. Love without trust is not love at all. We'll

say you're an old friend, a friend to whom she could turn in an hour of trial, knowing—

MAN

(Impatiently.) But, my dear sir, I—

HUSBAND

(Interrupting quietly.) I know of you, sir. Who does not? Your collection of watches and precious stones is known to connoisseurs throughout the land. I am a collector, in a way, myself.

MAN

(A bit bored.) From your wife's jewels, I should judge so.

(The older man turns to the WOMAN, who sits gazing empty-eyed into the fire, chin in hand. He stands behind the couch on which she sits, and places one hand gently on her shoulder. Impatiently she moves away.)

HUSBAND

(Softly.) Come, dear.

WOMAN

(A shade too fiercely.) No, I tell you. I will not go with you. I've never loved you. It was your wealth, your position, I loved, not you. But God knows I don't love these things enough to go back to you. I'd rather beg in the streets.

(The MAN, who is at the far end of the stage, laughs softly to himself. Both the WOMAN and the HUSBAND turn upon him.)

MAN

(Sweetly.) You'll forgive me. Hastily I formed a mental picture of the lady doing a sort of "Two Orphans" revival out in the snow.

HUSBAND

(Slightly mollified.) Come, Drusilla.

WOMAN

I loathe the very sight of you.

MAN

(In a blessed-are-the-peacemakers

tone of voice.) My lady, take your knight's advice. Go home.

WOMAN

Never.

HUSBAND

(With quaint, old-fashioned kindness.) There is one more argument I can use to bring you home. I dislike to make use of that before a stranger, although we're in his home. It would hurt you deeply, but it would cause you to reconsider your decision and accompany me.

WOMAN

(In an all but inhuman voice.) My God! You wouldn't dare. You—wouldn't—dare.

HUSBAND

(Quietly.) I'd dare anything rather than lose you. Anything.

WOMAN

(Sobbing.) Not that, dear God, not that.

MAN

(Quite upset at the turn events have taken.) Soft-pedal your grief a little, please.

WOMAN

Oh, God, what shall I do?

HUSBAND

(To WOMAN.) Shall I recall the fact that you—

WOMAN

(Shrieking.) Don't. Don't. For God's sake, don't. I'll do anything you wish, except go home with you.

MAN

(To HUSBAND.) Please take her away. This is too awful.

HUSBAND

(Ignoring the MAN's remarks.) You know that's the one thing I would have you do. Shall I—?

(The WOMAN sinks to the floor, wrapping her bared arms about her HUSBAND's knees, sobbing loudly all the while.)

WOMAN

Oh, God—don't remind me of that—don't remind me.

MAN

(Uncomfortably.) Please, please be quiet. You'll wake all the servants.

WOMAN

(Beyond herself.) I never, never thought—

MAN

S'hush, my dear! You must be quiet. I'll lose my spotless reputation.

HUSBAND

Come, my dear.

WOMAN

(Shrieking.) No!

MAN

There, there now. Calm yourself. I can't have a French melodrama enacted here at this time of night. It isn't done, you know. Please go away. I want to go to bed.

(The WOMAN has suddenly regained her calm, and rises, arranging her hair. She turns to her HUSBAND.)

WOMAN

You may do precisely as you wish. I'll not go home with you. I refuse to prolong the situation. I have no friends in town, so must ask the loan of money for the night. This I'll return when I find employment. It shouldn't be difficult with the intelligence I possess.

MAN

You might go to see Sir Herbert Tree—

HUSBAND

(Very softly.) Drusilla! Drusilla! *(The WOMAN unclasps the diamonds from her neck, strips the rings from her fingers, and places them, a sparkling heap, in her HUSBAND's outstretched hand.)*

WOMAN

The other trinkets you've given me are in the little safe upon my dressing-

table. I'll telephone in the morning where to send my clothes. And now, if you'll make me the loan— (*The HUSBAND turns away.*) Very well, then. Good-night. (*She turns to where the MAN stands, watching with visible interest.*) Good-bye, dear knight. You've been a "very perfit, gentil" knight." Perhaps, some day, we'll meet again, and then—who can tell?

MAN

Who can tell?

WOMAN

My cloak, if you please.

(*The MAN picks up the cloak and places it about her shoulders. She bows her thanks. The HUSBAND turns to the MAN.*)

HUSBAND

I wish to express my gratitude for your kindness to my wife and your courtesy to me. As you've seen, my wife means everything to me, everything.

MAN

(*Pleasantly.*) She would. She is leaving you.

HUSBAND

I'm not young, you know. The loss of Drusilla seems more than I can bear.

(*He appears about to be overcome, and the MAN leads him to the couch and pours him out a glass of water.*)

MAN

You'll be horribly lonesome without her.

HUSBAND

I could not bear to be alone again.

MAN

She'll not get along without you. You'll both be all broken up by a separation. If there's anything I can do—

HUSBAND

(*With emotion.*) You are so very kind.

MAN

I'd be pleased to have assisted in a reunion.

HUSBAND

Would it be asking too much of you to leave us for a very few minutes? There're certain things which can't be discussed before a third person.

MAN

You wish me to leave you alone?

HUSBAND

If the idea does not please you—? You said you'd be pleased to have assisted—

MAN

I was merely thinking of the lady's wishes.

HUSBAND

Drusilla, sir, is my all, the only thing that I desire. Money, position, influence are as nothing when compared with her. To lose her would kill me, I am sure.

MAN

Such love as yours is rare.

HUSBAND

I'll humble myself before her, beg her forgiveness, do anything to keep her by my side.

MAN

(*Turning to the WOMAN.*) Shall I do as he suggests, my lady? It might be for the best.

WOMAN

(*Rather helplessly.*) As you wish, Sir Knight.

(*The HUSBAND moves to where the WOMAN stands before the fire, holding out his hands.*)

HUSBAND

Dearest.

WOMAN

Wait until—

MAN

I'll step into the dining-room and find something with which to celebrate the reunion. When everything is quite settled, let me know. We'll have our little feast.

WOMAN

(Murmuring.) You've been so kind.

HUSBAND

Yes. You *have* been kind to us.

MAN

All's well that ends well.

WOMAN

It's not ended—yet.

MAN

I think the end's in sight.

WOMAN

I haven't promised anything so far, you know. But thank you, Sir Knight, just the same. It's been a very pleasant evening; one I shan't soon forget.

MAN

(Absently.) It's been an evening you'll remember until your dying day.

HUSBAND

You've made things easy for us.

MAN

(With a half smile.) I've tried to make things as easy as I could. At such a time—

HUSBAND

(Interrupting.) We shan't be long, I'm sure.

MAN

(Hand on door.) Don't hurry on my account. I shan't mind waiting.

(He goes out, closing the door after him. The attitude of both the WOMAN and the HUSBAND undergoes a change. They become businesslike and calm. She runs to the door through which the MAN has passed and hangs her dainty handkerchief over the knob, closing the keyhole thereby.)

WOMAN

(Returning.) This seems too good to be really true.

HUSBAND

(In a whisper.) We've not got them yet. (He moves toward the other door,

to see if it is fastened.) Be quick, and, above all, be quiet. (He hangs his handkerchief over the knob.)

WOMAN

(Smiling to herself, a bit triumphantly.) Very well, my dear, but, really, I feel that my histrionic talents are wasted in the drawing-room.

(The HUSBAND goes to the wall and switches off the two lights burning on either side of the fireplace. He finds the button for the table lamp, switches it off and, immediately, on again. It is the only light in room.)

HUSBAND

If Granville Barker had been here to-night I'm sure he'd make an honest woman of you.

(The WOMAN goes to the cabinet on the left of the French window and, taking a bunch of keys from a pocket inside the cloak she wears, opens the door with the second key she tries. Meantime the HUSBAND forces the door of the second cabinet. He speaks in an excited whisper.)

God, what a lot of them!

WOMAN

There're some beauties here.

HUSBAND

Help yourself, my dear.

(All the while they are moving between the centre table and the cabinets, throwing the jewels and watches on the cloth beneath the light.)

This is the easiest job we ever had.

WOMAN

You'd better make love to me, Jim. The honorable gentleman may grow suspicious. Younger sons aren't as foolish as they look.

(They are still piling the things on the table.)

HUSBAND

I say, old dear, you have got a head on you. (Raising his voice.) Drusilla, you're all in all to me. As far as I'm

concerned, you're the only woman in the world. (*Softly.*) How's that for a sample?

WOMAN

You're a regular Martin Harvey. Your love-making is both elegant and restrained.

HUSBAND

Lend an ear to this, my dear. (*Loudly.*) My darling, my beloved, how beautiful you are.

(*They are bringing the last of the jewels to the table.*)

WOMAN

(*Softly, pausing for a moment.*) Am I, Jimmie dear?

HUSBAND

As if I had to tell you that. (*Loudly.*) You do love me just a little bit, my onliest darling?

WOMAN

(*Loudly.*) After all, I think I love you just a little.

(*The jewels are all on the centre table by now, under the brilliant lamp-light. Immediately they begin disposing of them, she into a large pocket inside her cloak, he into a black silk bag produced from the folds of the overcoat he carried on his arm when he arrived. The shade on the table lamp is opaque above so that a strong light falls on their hands and the jewels, while their faces and the room as well are almost invisible.*)

HUSBAND

(*Loudly.*) And you'll return with me?

WOMAN

(*Loudly.*) That I cannot promise—yet. (*With soft sincerity.*) You know, Jim, I'd go through hell for you.

HUSBAND

(*Kissing her tenderly.*) Dear old girl, you have.

WOMAN

(*Softly.*) It's a marvelous collection.

HUSBAND

(*In a whisper.*) Worthingham knows a thing or two about stones. And once away, my dear, we're fixed for life.

WOMAN

(*Admiring a brooch she is about to put away.*) The Honorable Philip can do my shopping for me.

HUSBAND

(*In a loud voice.*) Come, Drusilla mia.

WOMAN

(*In the same tone.*) Will you promise to be good and kind to me?

HUSBAND

I'll do anything you say. I love you more than life itself. Please, please come with me.

WOMAN

(*Almost too loudly.*) As you wish, my dear.

HUSBAND

My own, my own Drusilla.

(*They have taken all the jewels. The cabinet doors swing open. The HUSBAND kisses the back of his hand noisily. The WOMAN takes a single rose from the bouquet she wears and, after a second's pause, places it, with a little sigh, under the lighted lamp on the centre table. They switch off the light, leaving the room by the French window, the curtains of which close behind them. The room is almost dark; the fire has died down. After a moment the MAN re-enters by door at left. He stumbles over a chair.*)

MAN

(*As if he meant it.*) Damn!

(*He switches on the table light. For a moment he stands quite still, looking at the empty cabinets, then closes the swinging doors. He turns, smiling whimsically.*)

Ahhhhhh—

(*He sits at centre table, the light up-*

on his face, and picks up the telephone.)

Give me Scotland Yard, please.

(There is a pause. He takes the rose in his hand and plays with it idly, smiling gently. A long-blown policeman's whistle sounds without.)

Are you there? Is this Scotland Yard? Yes. Yes. Give me the chief, please.

(The BOBBY enters through the French window. He salutes respectfully.)

BOBBY

We 'ave 'em, sir.

MAN

(Without surprise.) Good. Bring them in.

(The BOBBY, who has been standing just within the window, beckons without, and the WOMAN and the HUSBAND enter, handcuffed together. The MAN looks up, smiling.)

You have become reunited, sure enough.

(They stand side by side. She is quiet, but defiant. He is silent and self-controlled. The BOBBY places the silk bag, a handful of jewels and a revolver on the centre table beside the MAN.)

BOBBY

Some little souvenirs, sir, and a gun belonging to the gentleman.

MAN

Thank you, Beal. (He points to the door to the right.) And I say, Beal, I wish you'd look in there and tell Mr. Worthingham that his things are safe. You might add that, if he'll come here for a moment I'll introduce him to the two smartest crooks in London.

(The BOBBY goes out.)

MAN

(At telephone.) Is that you, chief? This is Hammerton; yes, Hammerton. I'm at Mr. Worthingham's now. They got the stuff, but we got them. With

the goods, too, so the evidence is ours. And chief—

(The HUSBAND makes a move toward the French window, pulling the WOMAN with him. She fumbles at her cloak. The MAN quietly picks up the revolver with his right hand as he replaces the receiver with his left. He calmly points the revolver at the pair.)

WOMAN

(To HUSBAND.) Hammerton! Of Scotland Yard!

HUSBAND

(To the MAN.) So you knew us all the time?

MAN

I'm afraid I did. (He rises and bows politely, revolver in hand.) I'm pleased to have met you two at last.

(As the MAN stoops over to make his bow the WOMAN suddenly whips out a small revolver from a fold of her cloak and, with her free hand, fires—not at the MAN—but at the table lamp. There is a crash of broken glass, then complete darkness. A second later there is a shot from the MAN's revolver, followed by another from the WOMAN. Then silence. The stage is quite dark. The BOBBY enters by door at right, greatly excited.)

BOBBY

You're not hurt, are you Mr. Hammerton?

(The BOBBY switches on all the lights save the table lamp, which is broken beyond repair. The MAN is seated at the table, head in hands. As the BOBBY speaks, he looks up and smiles his whimsical smile.)

MAN

No, Beal, thank you; I'm not hurt.

BOBBY

And they got away, sir?

MAN

(Irrelevantly.) She was such a pretty woman. (He lights a cigarette.) And tremendously clever, too.

(The MAN gathers up the jewels from the table and places them, with the black silk bag, on the silver tray, removing the bottles and siphons in order to do so. He hands the tray to the BOBBY.)

You'd better take these to Mr. Worthingham at once, Beal. He may be worried. Tell him I don't think his callers will bother him any more.

BOBBY

(Taking tray.) Yes, sir.

(Just as he is about to leave the room the BOBBY turns and faces the MAN; who is mixing himself a whiskey-and-soda.)

As long as we 'ave the jewels, sir, I'm thankful that you let the lady get away.

MAN

(Lighting a cigarette.) Don't thank me, Beal, old boy. Thank the author.

THE CURTAIN FALLS SWIFTLY



THE CONCLUSIONS OF A WOMAN

By Dorothy Taylor

THE difference between men and women is that their pleasantest memories are our greatest tragedies.

Life is largely an affair of bread and butter, but everyone should have a few illusions for dessert—and love is the best of them.

An artist was being congratulated on his luck. Without looking up he remarked: "Life, my friends, is more consistent than lucky," and went on with his work.

The reason men succeed better than women is that man lives for a purpose—woman for a person.

When a woman is successful, it is usually because some man has hurt her.



LOSS

By H. Thompson Rich

LIKE poems of a dream,
Love faded utterly,—
Like verses fired of wine,
Forgotten.

A laugh, a kiss, a sigh. . .
Ended.

UNREGENERATE

By Charles Earl Gaymon

THE man who is paid to administer justice gazed down upon the girl and in a compassionate tone said:

"You have said that you were born and reared in the city. A product of an artificial environment, you have been guilty of a natural act: you have given birth to a child. Is it not so, my dear?—If I have understood correctly, the pavement has been your meadow, the gutter your brook, the dusty park your wildwood, the little lakes your ocean, the picture-show your only voyage into other worlds, and the chromo of haying time over the asthmatic organ in the parlor your only glimpse of God's green earth. You have, in a word, been reared a girl of the paved street: speaking scientifically, kenogenesis has done everything in its power to subordinate palingenesis in you; yet you have run true to type at last—the human nature in you has broken out. A breath of perfume has come from the garbage can; a lily-of-the-valley has sprouted in a crevice of a cement walk; a butterfly has broken its shell within the harsh walls of a bank vault. Is it not so, my dear? Very well. We have a big house in the country waiting for you. We shall take you, if you will, from this city of cement and iron, and you may take the little natural thing with you. Remember, you have your choice: the flower shall be transplanted from the city canyon to the country dale; the butterfly shall be released from its steel cell to flutter over the grass and the grain; or you may go back to the asphalt and the horizon that is always just across the street. Will you, my dear, grow up a natural thing in natural surroundings? . . . And the baby, my dear—?" He paused, and he waited.

Then the girl, without hesitation, without glancing at the child in her arms, said:

"It all listens mighty nice, yer honor, but this is the life!"



WHEN a woman is clever she can afford to be a bit indiscreet. Moreover, she usually is.



IT is never safe to marry a widow unless her first husband was hanged.

THE TWO-HOUR DAY

A STUDY IN EFFICIENCY

By William C. DeMille

ONE day about the middle of my last year in college I received a telegram which dashed all my well-built plans to the ground. My Uncle Eli had died the day before and the message bid me hasten home at once.

The same evening saw me walking up the familiar road from the station, my whole fortune in an old dress-suit case and my heart heavy, for Uncle Eli was my only relative and I was now alone in the world. I knew that things had been going badly with the kind-hearted old gentleman and that he had neglected to pay my tuition for the final term of college.

As I plodded doggedly along between fields just putting forth the first green shoots of spring, I looked the situation squarely in the face. I would have to give up all hope of my degree and wrest the best living possible from the little plot of ground and the few dilapidated old buildings which formed my sole inheritance.

Just as I was turning into the broken old gate a white figure flitted out of the shadows and two fluttering little hands sought and found mine.

"Oh, Bill!" murmured a wonderful low voice, and then again after a moment's pause—"Oh, Bill!"

Bitterly I remembered that I now had no right to speak to her. Her father was the general manager of a large wholesale liquor business and she had over a thousand dollars in her name. I unclasped her arms:

"Not now Maude," I muttered thickly, "not now."

II

THE day after the funeral I took stock of my possessions. I found that, in order to keep me in college, Uncle Eli had gradually been selling his land until at the time of his death only an acre and a half remained; just enough ground in fact to accommodate the little frame farmhouse, the roofless barn and the large chicken yard with an unsanitary coop on one side. My total live stock consisted of eleven white leg-horn hens and one Plymouth Rock rooster. These patient creatures looked at me eagerly as I strolled into the yard. There was no corn to give to them and they had been quite neglected since Uncle Eli's death. I returned their gaze with interest. A wave of emotion almost mastered me as I thought that these few fowls had been my dear uncle's sole companions while I was at college. But there was no time for sentiment. The hungry look of the birds reminded me that I, too, had had no breakfast. I was considering the few coppers in my pocket which formed my only cash asset when, glancing toward the coop, I saw something white glimmering in the straw. In two leaps I was beside it, and the problem of food was solved for the present. It was an egg.

III

AFTER breakfast I took an old spade and devoted several hours to finding such food for my stock as nature afforded. The fact that I could count on eleven eggs a day seemed to give me

arm new strength. I knew there was no work to be had in the town, or at least no work promising a future such as I had a right to expect after the scientific education I had taken so much trouble to acquire. No; the die was cast. These twelve birds should be my means of winning wealth and Maude.

It was now evening and one by one the hens retired to rest. I had, during the day, collected ten more eggs and selecting the two largest I went to the village store and exchanged my produce for merchandise in the shape of salt and pepper. On the way home I stopped for a moment at Maud's house. She met me on the porch and once more her little white hands fluttered around my neck.

"Oh, Bill!" she cried; and this time I looked into her eyes and felt in my heart that my eleven hens would yet equalize the thousand dollars which had seemed such an impossible obstacle two nights before.

IV

THAT night I sat up figuring out the prospects. One thing was evident; I must find some way of increasing the output of eggs. I could live on six a day, and that left five as capital out of which I would have to save enough to raise my broods, build a new sanitary chicken-house and lay by enough to take me and my twelve charges through the long winter months.

But here another difficulty presented itself; if I allowed any of my hens to devote the time necessary to hatching a brood of chicks I would lessen the supply of eggs, since setting hens do not lay.

The more I thought it over the more difficult the problem seemed. Of course an incubator would have covered the point, but incubators were expensive and I had no money.

And then, in a flash, I saw the answer. I must train my hens to lay more than one egg each day. Like all great discoveries it seemed so simple once I had found it. Of course there would be

practical difficulties, but what of that? Of what use was my scientific education if I could not accomplish my aim once I had the objective point clearly in my eye?

"Eureka!" I cried to myself. "Put on your thinking cap my boy," and with a smile of firm resolve I tumbled into bed to dream of two little white hands fluttering around my neck, and a wonderful low voice which kept murmuring "Oh, Bill!"

V

For the next three days I lived in the chicken coop, studying the habits of my feathered partners. It was evident that they laid their eggs during the first hour after sunrise. That meant absolute idleness for the rest of the day, with the exception of the ten minutes or so consumed in eating. It was just such inefficiency as this that caused the hundreds of tumbled-down farm houses throughout our state while the Italian immigrants by working sixteen to eighteen hours a day were slowly but surely acquiring the acres left vacant by starving American farmers.

But these were American hens. For generations their breed had only one egg a day and I realized that in changing their working schedule I would run against a condition sanctioned by long usage. Added to this was the natural lack of intelligence common to all hens. I must use tact.

The problem was now a simple case of mathematics. The hen's working day was one hour long and there was an interval of twenty-three hours between days. The interval, I decided, was the factor which prevented the efficiency of my plant.

One day at noon I was standing by the chicken yard, my problem still unsolved, when the day gradually began to grow darker. There was no sign of a cloud in the sky and I was at a loss for an explanation until I happened to look at the sun and saw a curved shadow gradually extending itself across the glowing orb. I then remembered that a

total eclipse of the sun was due on this day, and that it had begun. I stood entranced watching the sun gradually disappear and the stars come out. Then my eyes fell on the deserted chicken yard and I saw that all twelve of my feathered friends had gone to roost. I trembled with excitement as I realized the tremendous significance of this fact. A day had closed for them, it is true, when the sun disappeared, but would a new day begin as the eclipse passed? I am not ashamed to say that as I waited there in the strange mid-day darkness I breathed a prayer. As if in answer the outer edge of old Phoebus began to show clear once more, and I stood like a statue awaiting my fate.

Suddenly the air was set vibrating with the clarion call of my Plymouth Rock. So far so good. The rooster considered a new day had dawned but would his less imaginative companions see it as he did?

Several years before the general buyer for one of the largest ostrich farms in the world had said to me:

"My Boy—many a man has lost his one big chance by being in too much of a hurry."

As he was then drawing a salary of \$5,800 a year his words made a deep impression on me; and I recalled them now as I stood waiting for my "one big chance."

"In an hour," I assured myself—"in one short hour I shall know." And for that hour I stood immovable, weighing the possible chances of success.

At the appointed time I rushed over to the coop. There were the eleven nests which were now to answer my life problem. The hens went out as I entered and I was alone in the coop. Taking a firm grip on myself I looked into the boxes. Yes, it was true; in each of the nests lay a beautiful full-sized egg.

VI

My problem was now comparatively simple. I saw that I had only to produce darkness in order to make the hens think the day was over and then by

admitting them to the light again a crop of eggs would result.

I had often amused myself as a boy, by painting little landscape studies and I now thought of a plan to put my hens in an artificial landscape which I could darken at will. While I was wondering how to secure enough canvas to serve my purpose I heard a cheery hail from the gate and looking up I saw old Captain Hawkins, owner and master of the fishing sloop "Penquin."

"Avast there, young lubber," called the old sea-dog. "Splice my marline-spike if I can find any help in this ding whisted town."

"What's the trouble, Captain?" I enquired, "looking for help?"

"You bet I be," said the sailor, lapsing for a moment into the speech of his up-state village.

"Where's your crew?" I asked.

"Tight as a bowsprit-stringpiece," said he, "and no son of a barnacle sober enough to lay aloft and unsplice the top-mizzin-m'st-galln't-s'l."

Suddenly I saw how to get my canvas.

"Tell you what I'll do, Cap'n," I said as calmly as I could. "If you'll give me an old sail of some sort I'll unsplice your top-mizzin-m'st-galln't-s'l."

"By the great nor-nor-east I'll do it," stormed Hawkins, and that night I returned home staggering under the weight of two old sails that the Captain had paid me for my labor. As I returned into my own little house I saw a light in Maud's window. "It won't be long now, sweetheart," I whispered to the distant gleam, and it almost seemed as if I could hear her wonderful low voice answering—"Oh, Bill!"

VII

At peep of day I was astir, cutting my canvas into strips of the required height and sewing them together. My savings at this time amounted to \$2.47 and I invested almost half of them in a strong serviceable paint brush and six cans of cheap paint. I then set to work to paint a panorama to go around the

chicken yard, painting in rather good likenesses of the house and all the other landmarks. This finished I painted a ceiling piece of sky blue and waiting until night I set the panorama around the chicken yard; pitched the sky piece over it like a tent, cut in the latter a round hole big enough to admit plenty of light, and arranged a simple system of light-proof ventilators. The round hole seen against the bright sky outside would, when covered with yellow glass, look just like the sun, and by pulling a piece of canvas over it I could produce night at any time.

Just as I finished setting the last piece of my scenery the sun rose and as I was inside my little artificial world I could appreciate the effect. As the daylight came streaming in through the yellow glass in the canvas roof, it illuminated the panorama and I had to reach my hand through the netting and touch the painted wall to realize that I was not in the open air. There stood the house in its accustomed place. There wound the road down through the hills, and above stretched a beautiful blue sky, in the center of which a gentle, yellow August sun shone mildly.

As the hens came out I fed them and at the end of the hour took the usual eleven eggs into the house. Returning after another hour I entered the chicken house again and pulled the string which shut off the sun. At once the gentle darkness of summer night closed down on my flock which, one after another, retired forthwith to roost. I found that in fifteen minutes every bird was sound asleep. I pulled the suncord once more, admitting the light, and my faithful fowls awoke. I again fed them, taking care to give them only one-sixth of their normal allowance and after the lapse of an hour gathered eleven more eggs, adding them to the first group. I now looked at my watch and found that it was 8:30. My misguided hens had presented me with twenty-two eggs in three hours. This began to look like efficiency and by doing a little figuring I found that I could divide the time of my hens into working days of one hour

each with a one-hour night between, thus achieving six full days between sunrise and sunset. The remarkable thing was, as my figures showed, that my hens, although giving me six times the normal number of eggs, were, in fact, sleeping eighteen hours in twenty-four instead of their accustomed twelve.

This seemed too good to be true but figures cannot lie, and I lost no time in going over to Maud's house. Telling her I had something interesting to show her I led her to the tent-like exterior of my panorama. As I explained my scheme I seemed to smell orange blossoms in the air. I showed her that my eleven hens were now producing sixty-six eggs per day, and that after deducting six for my personal use I had a working capital of five dozen left, which, at a minimum of fifty cents per dozen, gave me an assured income of two dollars and fifty cents per day.

When the innocent girl at my side heard these figures her eyes filled with tears. Her little white hands fluttered around my neck and, with a downcast glance of girlish modesty she whispered, "Oh, Bill!"

VIII

THE following spring we were married. I now had one hundred hens and was garnering six hundred eggs each day.

But the problem still remained. In my eagerness at first I had not noticed the full significance of the figures I had written. These now began to stand before my eyes with another meaning.

You will remember that under the new system the hens slept eighteen hours in each twenty-four-hour day. I now saw that my system had one serious defect. My fowls only needed twelve hours' sleep and the extra six hours of slumber was not only economic waste, but was really bad for the hens as they did not get enough exercise to keep in good condition.

While I was pondering this problem one night my wife, with an affectionate gesture, knocked over the lamp and set

the house on fire. Realizing that there was no hope of saving the place, we carried the day's output of six hundred eggs to safety and stood with our arms around each other, watching our little home go up in flames. When the fire was at its height I heard a commotion in the chicken coop and entering I found that the illumination had so lit up the panorama that the hens had again been deceived and had added another hundred eggs to the day's supply.

"Maud, Maud," I cried, embracing my dear helpmate who had so simply solved the problem with which I had wrestled in vain; "Maud, my darling, you have doubled our fortune." Never shall I forget the divine look of proud love with which she laid her little head on my shoulder and quietly sobbed, "Oh, Bill!"

IX

AFTER that eventful night it was a simple matter to put Maud's practical discovery to practical use. I had a large arc light with a powerful reflector installed just over the hole in the roof,

and the current was automatically turned on every two hours through the night.

This gave the hens twelve hours every twenty-four hours and resulted in one dozen eggs per day from each hen or one hundred dozen from my flock of one hundred. Reduced to figures this meant fifty dollars per day or three hundred dollars per week, since we did not work the hens on Sunday, and the hundred eggs which were laid each Sabbath we devoted to church purposes.

That was eight years ago. I now have a large plant of over four thousand hens. The daily return is forty-eight thousand eggs which gives me a clear saving of ten thousand dollars per week, allowing three hundred per week for the expense of running the plant and seventeen hundred per week for living expense.

I am regarded as a successful man, but I have done no more than any young American can do if he has as incentives the love of a true woman, and the determination to use to its *full efficiency* whatever opportunity may offer.



ONE WOMAN'S WAY

By Kathryn S. Riggs

HE had left her. . . . Life held nothing for her outside his love. . . . Jealousy-raged and tore at her heart. . . . Death were a peaceful thing! But she did not choose to die.

Soon he would be near with that other one. . . .

But a little time and she would look upon that face so false—so loved—would have the chance for revenge.

Suddenly she heard his footstep and her mind flew to a drawer where a pistol lay. . . .

For one moment she stood irresolute, then with a curious smile she turned to her dressing-table, took up a powder puff and, bending forward, powdered her nose.



THE MEMORY THAT FAILED

By Bertha Lowry Gwynne

MISS JUNE AMBLER, traveling in California, to her fiancé, Mr. John Constant, of Richmond, Virginia.

My Darling:

I wrote you a frabjous letter yesterday—didn't you love it?—but I must write this little one before I go to bed. It is almost morning, and here I've been sitting all night reading Kipling!

I don't care for him, as you know, but ever since that wonderful night last summer when you told me the story of "The Light that Failed," I have intended reading it. I wanted to know whether it was you or Rudyard that had made of it a vital memory.

Dearest, it was you. As I read, there came back to me the soft summer night, the odor of the cinnamon vine and you, your dear self, with your deep, tender voice. Instinctively, my hand reached out for yours. Don't you remember that when you had finished the story I kissed you and wanted to cry? To-night, when I laid down the book I cried, and wanted to kiss you!

JUNE.

Telegram

Richmond, Va., March 6, 1915.

Miss June Ambler,

Hotel del Coronado, Coronado Beach, Cal.

I have never read the light that failed.

JOHN CONSTANT.



A WOMAN'S idea of heaven is to have her husband kiss her affectionately before the woman who didn't get him.



MORE women marry for lingerie than for love. The same applies to men.

CAFÉ LA JOIE

By Frances Norville Chapman

IF you were fortunate enough to be a student in Paris during the middle nineties and lived anywhere between the Rue du Cherche Midi and the Rue St. Jacques, you will recognize my description of the Café la Joie, which isn't its real name, although it sounds like it. I had been in Paris some three months before Razewill took us there, the three of us, Jules, Phillipe, and me.

I was ridiculously young when I left Boston and my father shook his head sorrowfully over my joyous exuberance. . . . "Don't expect too much, my boy. . . . There'll be landmarks, of course, but things are sadly changed. The *real* Latin Quartier is gone. . . . Why, I remember how we used to" . . . then catching himself, he added with paternal severity: . . . "It's a good thing, too, for you are going there to work. Art is to be a profession with you, not a pastime."

At which I laughed in my sleeve, for although my father had made a pretty good thing of his chosen profession of architecture, I had often suspected that his two years in Paris had been mostly pastime. Then, too, I had heard my grandfather, who was an artist, as he wagged his head with a reminiscent glow lighting his dim old eyes: . . . "The Latin Quartier. Bah! . . . There isn't any Latin Quartier nowadays. . . . hasn't been for twenty years. . . . When I was over year before last the Boul' Mich' reminded me of Columbus Avenue. In my day"

Well, if it had changed I didn't know it. It was all there and more like my expectations than I had dared hope, and I did all the absurd, extravagant

things that I had imagined myself doing; discarding my somewhat dandified inclinations in the matter of dress and choosing the baggiest of corduroy trousers, grey flannel shirt with a flowing blue tie, which I privately thought very becoming, and a soft, slouch hat. If I didn't let my hair grow long, I was somewhat careless about keeping it trimmed, and I tried to raise a little pointed beard which covered all of my face pretty well except my chin, where I wanted it to grow. Jules said, in his slow, blunt way, that it made me look like a hairy-mouthed dog, which hurt my feelings and so I began to shave and feel clean and comfortable again.

I started work immediately at the Académie Julian, and I soon made friends with most of the students, but particularly with Jules Labiche, a big, hairy Provençal, slow of speech and thought, who did the most exquisite, tiny bits of still life; and Phillipe Lili, who was older than we. He looked like an Italian and he came from Carcassone, and it seemed a delightful coincidence to me that I should meet someone who had really lived in that romantic place. He had a round, good-natured face and kind brown eyes, like a faithful, seeking dog's; he sang divinely, but he was determined to become a painter. Several years ago in New York I supped with him and his wife after one of their greatest triumphs in Charpentier's "Louise." His wife, a slender, white-faced thing, with swift, darting little motions, pale, gauzy draperies and brilliant, unfathomable eyes, made me think of a dragon fly. . . . As he sipped his wine Phillipe grew pensive and stretching out his

pudgy hand exclaimed regretfully: "There was my real metier . . . All gone to waste." I didn't tell him, of course, how atrociously bad his painting had been, but I praised his beautiful singing, which didn't at all console him for what he believed was genius gone to waste.

Well, we three became fast friends and we took a studio together on the fifth floor of a ramshackle old house in the Rue Vavin, just off the narrow, dull Rue d'Assas, and because we were so high up and the intervening roofs chanced to be low, we had a pleasant view of the green of the Luxembourg Gardens. The studio was a great barn of a place, but we soon made it home-like, and we slept and cooked our breakfasts there and painted like . . . gods . . . at least we felt a godlike faith in our own abilities. We usually dined at queer little cafés and restaurants under blossoming chestnut trees. . . . Supped on soupe à l'oignon, a bit of cheese and black coffee; or, being in funds, we dined sumptuously . . . an omelette stuffed with mushrooms, a *canard aux navets*, a crisp salad and a bottle of the yellow Rhone wine that Phillipe loved . . . and we talked . . . how we talked! arguing heatedly over all sorts of questions that the world needed settled . . . morality, science, religion, and then, in natural sequence, art, its future and *our* place in it; the old out-worn traditions; the new school and its revolutionary tendencies, to which we heartily subscribed, and which have all become established realities, only to be threatened now by the crazy dreams of a lot of half-educated beggars who won't take time to learn to draw and are color-blind. . . . Why, just a few days ago my talented young nephew tried to argue this out with me and began to talk about when *he* went to Paris. . . . I had to warn him that everything is changed in the Quartier now . . . all the color and romance is gone. There really is no Latin Quartier any more. . . . But perhaps I can't judge, for as I look back I seem to remember but one season in

Paris . . . eternal Spring . . . the horse-chestnuts were always in bloom, the Bois was always green, and we were always dining at some quaint hole of a place tucked away from the tourist or casual guest, which brings me back to M. Razewill and the Café la Joie.

One evening Razewill stopped at the studio; he was a Russian and he must have been pretty well along in years then; despite his piercing blue eyes and high Cossack cheek bones, he looked like a poet, but in reality he was assistant to Corbeau, the famous fencing master. I haven't a doubt, however, that he had written poetry, for he was the most versatile man I ever met, and it seemed to me that he knew or had known everybody worth while in Paris. . . . While we washed our brushes he sat at the piano making the loveliest music imaginable, to which Phillipe improvised a vocal accompaniment, which made Jules and me drop our brushes and listen in ravished wonderment.

"Come, *mes enfants*," old Razewill brought his hands down on the keys in a crashing chord, "don't dawdle. Tonight there is a moon and you dine with me at La Joie."

We didn't know whether La Joie was a woman or a café, but we shed our painting blouses and made quick toilettes by running our fingers through our hair and putting on our loose coats and slouch hats, although I couldn't resist a surreptitious glance at the mirror to straighten my beautiful blue tie, and we swaggered forth *bras dessus, bras dessous*, taking the sidewalk as we went.

We crossed the Avenue de l'Observatoire with its stained old statues and allées of trees leading up to the Carpeaux fountain, which we paused to admire in the fading light; past the Ecole des Mines, and somewhere between the Boul' Mich and the Rue St. Jacques on the Rue de l'Abbé de l'Épée Razewill stopped before what looked like a rather grimy little pâtisserie.

We entered the shop, which was really a big, bare room with a few

round marble-topped tables pushed up to the red plush-covered bench that ran around two sides of the room. Near the entrance was a counter with a cashier's desk and a glass case filled with crusty brown loaves a yard long, petits fours, and little cakes and pâtes croquantes filled with glazed gooseberries and colored meringues. The woman behind the desk nodded at Razewill familiarly and gave us a glance of shrewd observation and polite welcome as he led us through the room into a smaller apartment more barren and uninviting than the first; and he laughed at our rueful faces as we sat down at one of the bare little tables. . . . Presently le propriétaire bustled in. Razewill addressed him as Papa Vachette; he had a huge, red nose and he wore a big white apron and a cook's cap, and he was so glad to see Razewill, whom he all but kissed, and he made us so welcome, insisting that we have a sirop de groseille; *avec mes compliments*, that we began to feel better and to suspect that Razewill had a card up his sleeve, which proved to be true, for after we drank our sirop and a grenadine, in which Papa Vachette joined us, we rose and followed them through a dim little hall where our footsteps echoed loudly on the bare wooden floor. Papa Vachette paused for a moment and then threw open a little lattice door, exclaiming dramatically:

"Voilà! messieurs."

Well, our exclamations of admiration and pleasure must have satisfied him, for it was like stepping into the Arabian Nights. The buildings formed a quadrangle, and in the centre was a little garden so cunningly laid out that it was like a miniature park with allées of flowering chestnut trees leading up to little arbors where the tables were never laid for more than two; a gallery, reached by a little outside stairway, ran around the three sides of the enclosure with trellises covered with vines and climbing roses and little trees in painted green tubs screening each table from its neighbor. Magic lanterns in strange, fantastic shapes swung over the tables

and were strung through the branches of the trees, and we could hear the remote fall and splash of water that played in a little fountain near the hedge of lilacs that completed the square of the garden.

It was early and there weren't many diners and Papa Vachette pointed out all the cunning arrangements of shrubs and winding paths. "So small it is, and yet one could even lose his way," he declared and we agreed with him and felt that we had made a great find in this jewel of a place, forgetting for the moment that we were Razewill's guests.

We dined on the gallery in the centre. I won't try to tell you of the superlative goodness of that dinner. Razewill was a great epicure and the ordering of a meal was like a ritual with him. From that night I became something of a gourmet, and grew so fussy and pretentious in the choice and combination of foods and wines that after a time no one ever thought of ordering if I were in the party. I remember, too, that it was the first time I ever tasted absinthe. It burned my tongue, but I liked to watch it cream and curdle in the glass. I never learned to care for it, but I lied and said I did.

At any rate we dined far more sumptuously than was our wont and we sat spellbound as Razewill talked about Monet and Degas, Manet and George Moore, whom he had known well; the kindly old Bougereau, whose pictures people were beginning to be ashamed to admire; Verlaine and the shadowy Arthur Rimbaud. Razewill had been one of the few real friends who had followed Oscar Wilde to the lonely little Cemetery Bagneaux, the first real resting place that tragic, troubled life had ever known. . . . He didn't exaggerate his acquaintance with the great and the near-great . . . he knew all classes; and as the little garden filled up more than one party stopped at our table or waved him a cordial greeting, and among them we recognized a painter who had arrived, an opera singer,

a party of actors from the Comédie Française.

We sat until long past midnight and most of the lanterns had guttered out, leaving the little garden in darkness except where the moonlight trickled down through the trees, laying strange patterns on the white sanded paths. Every one had gone and an old woman was beginning to clear up the east gallery.

Presently we heard steps stumbling up the little stairway and Razewill paused in the act of pushing back his chair. "It's Felix," he exclaimed with a note of satisfaction in his voice, and we paused, too, for we felt sure that Felix must be worth waiting for.

It was rather a dingy, unkempt figure that came swaying towards us, but the eyes blazing in the dead-white face would have arrested attention anywhere. . . . All sorts of banal thought flashed through my head. . . . Poe's Haunted Palace . . . a soul haunting a dead body. . . . He smiled a little scornfully as Razewill presented us and we felt unaccountably young and inexperienced, and as he drew out a chair he rapped sharply on the table with his long, bony fingers, like talons, but Papa Vachette was in no hurry and he frowned forbiddingly as he saw who had summoned him so imperiously. Felix croaked "Absinthe," and Razewill nodded his head at le propriétaire, who obeyed, although he took his time about it. Felix took up the glass with a hand none too steady and sipped slowly and lovingly. . . . I wished he had had mine, too. . . .

Presently he began to talk. We had thought that Razewill could talk, but he was merely a foil for the brilliant, rapier-like wit, the delicate sentiment, the keen analysis, the devastating jeu d'esprit that flashed and sizzled about—and over—our heads. We three young cubs sat spellbound, but not altogether silent, for Felix included us, drew us out until with superb frankness, incredible fluency, we were expressing opinions about things we'd never heard or thought of before. I

think we all got a little drunk, and we might have stayed there until morning if the scrubwoman hadn't reached our end of the gallery and began moving the tables and chairs about noisily. She was a shapeless thing with a great red face that looked like meat that has hung too long, and she crawled in and out among the tables, puffing and panting like some grotesque, half-human quadruped.

Felix declared that it was an offense, an insult, that anything so shapeless and ugly as that scrubwoman should live. . . . "Sacré nom de Dieu," he raved. "To think of all the beauty in the world and a blot like that!" We agreed with him, although privately I thought Felix, with his shabby clothes, greasy long black hair and dirty finger nails, rather blotchy himself, and I had a sneaking fear that the woman had heard him, but if she did she made no sign, but went knocking her brush against the table legs until we rose and left the place to her.

We walked almost up to the Jardin des Plantes before we realized that we were going in the wrong direction. I suspect Razewill's head was clear enough, but he knew we needed the walk, and as we retraced our steps Felix stopped at the Café la Joie and bade us good night, but we arranged a rendezvous for the next evening.

We walked up through the Petit Luxembourg and over into the gardens and sat on a bench near the sunken fountain in the centre, while Razewill told us about Felix. He had been a poet of promise some twenty-odd years before. He never brought out but one volume but it took Paris by storm.

"I suppose Dane is still a poet at heart," Razewill said generously, and we interrupted him eagerly: "Dane! Not Felix Dane of the little volume, *Twilight* . . . *Crépuscule*!" We always called them the Lise poems.

"Yes, it is the same, and you do well to call them Lise poems, for they were all to her, every one of them, and he, poor fellow, has lived in a twilight that

is more like a fog since she left him."

"But was Lise *real*?" We had liked to think of those supreme love poems as the voice of an abstract, spiritual passion.

"Oh, yes, she was real enough," Razewill replied. "I knew her well, or as well as anyone except Felix. She was a beautiful, fragile little thing, with the whitest, most spiritual face I ever saw. She had an exquisite singing voice and could dance like a sprite, but there was always about her a queer reserve which it seemed impossible for anyone to penetrate. She and Felix were together for a year or two and he was doing promising work, when something happened, I never knew just what, but I heard she'd taken up with an Englishman of title who threw her over and that she developed consumption and died in a hovel; I don't know, but Felix began to go downhill and he disappeared for a time. When he came back he brought out his volume, which immediately caused a furore. Lise's name was on the lips of every lady and every cocotte between the Port-Royal and Montmartre. . . . No one knows how he has lived all these years; he doesn't work and he's never written another line. But he made Lise immortal, although I suspect it is his attitude more than the poems that have preserved the memory of her personality with those of us who knew her, for to talk to Felix is to talk about Lise."

"Does he *talk* about her?" Jules questioned.

"Talk about her? He doesn't talk about anything else ordinarily. . . . Wait until you know him better."

We became regular patrons at La Joie; we were in love with the place, but we couldn't afford to dine there often, for the prices were stiffish for our young purses, but Papa Vachette always made us welcome, and if we ordered no more than a sirop he made us feel that he was particularly glad to see us, and we felt very blasé when we introduced a friend, and it had to be a very particular friend indeed, for we

were jealous of the place, and Papa Vachette joined us in a *petit verr'd'eau-de-vie*.

We soon found that Felix never put in an appearance before midnight and usually not until the last guest had gone; perhaps Papa Vachette wouldn't let him in before, although he always seemed to have a few sous to jingle in his pocket. He was always shabby and often dirty and the worse for the absinthe which he drank constantly, but he always came and we thought he was worth waiting for. He told us about Lise until she became a living reality to us. I never knew anyone who could so impress his own poignant memories upon his listeners. . . . How much of our impressionability was due to our youth I don't know, but I've actually felt the tears sting my eyes as he talked, and we found ourselves speaking of "poor Lise" as though we, too, had known and lost her.

We tried to make him write, but he laughed at us and we sat for an entranced hour while he recited every poem in the book. . . . "After that!" . . . non, non," he exclaimed, as he threw out his long, slender fingers with their black-rimmed nails in an expressive gesture. "I could do no better, and I will not do worse." But we felt sure that he would never do worse, for he saw Beauty everywhere, heard it, felt it, smelled it; listening he heard the spherical song of the stars, but he would not put it down on paper. . . . He hated ugliness as a saint hates sin. The wheezing old scrubwoman aroused a disgust that was vitriolic; Papa Vachette's big, red nose made him sick . . . ill . . . he would lean over the table in pantomime of his distress, but you may be sure he never let Papa Vachette see or hear him, for he stood in fear of him, although he didn't mind what he said before the scrubwoman or the bus who set up the tables and had a watery eye that was particularly offensive to Felix.

We got to know a lot of the patrons and we had more than one gay party which lasted until I don't know when,

but I do know that more than once the sun was shining when we all piled into fiacres and had breakfast at a little café near the Pont d'Austerlitz, where we ate on the upstairs verandah and watched the river boats, mouches and hirondelles, as they started on their first trip to Auteuil. Felix, of course, was never at these parties. He avoided people, and we heard that he had never spoken to a woman since he lost his Lise, which, to our sentimental souls, lent a fine, romantic flavor to the whole story.

One night, it must have been at the end of summer, for it was the last time, but one, that I remember Phillipe being with us at La Joie, we had dined, and Phillipe being in low spirits, we were trying, rather unsuccessfully, to cheer him up. Razewill joined us later, and as we sipped our coffee a little party came through the lattice door into the garden.

"Look, look," Razewill exclaimed. "There, the man with the girl in green." We craned our necks and saw a big, blond giant with two girls in black and a tiny creature in green; the dress was of some gauzy stuff with silver bands and here and there was a touch of black. . . . She made me think of a splendid dragon-fly. A step behind followed a small man with a pointed beard and a flowing tie. There was something dapper and finished about his appearance, and from our gallery seats we remarked the enormous width between his brilliant eyes, and the conscious little smile that seemed to play constantly about his mobile lips.

"That, *mes amis*, is Charpentier! I've known him since he was a pupil of Massenet's, where I used to see him. He is known now as a talented composer, but some day the whole world will know Paris from his interpretation of her. . . . It has thrown a spell about him, and"—he lowered his voice confidentially—"already he is writing an opera!" . . . he threw up his hands in an expressive gesture that told us of the superlative excellencies of that opera far more eloquently than words.

"Which is he?" Phillipe inquired eagerly, for he could never stifle his interest in music and musical people.

"Not the big blond. . . . That is Paul Nestor, the 'cellist. I've known him since he was so high, and his father and his mother for that matter, both singers and dark as Gascons, and where Paul got that blond head I doubt if even his mother could tell, and if a mother should not know of her child's blondness, who should? I ask you that . . . me who am speaking to you now . . . although I do not mean to imply that Madam Nestor is anything but a saint, *une ange*, name of God I should say not!" and he glared at us so angrily that we hastened to assure him that Madam Nestor's virtue was secure so far as we were concerned, and we began to question him eagerly about Charpentier, whose music had never particularly interested me. . . . We talked about music for a long time, and Phillipe grew pensive and took out a piece of paper and a bit of chalk and began to block out a head which looked more like a pumpkin than anything that ever grew on a human form.

All around us was the hum of voices, now and then the rise of a woman's laugh, the soft clash of china and glass, and the murmur of the little fountain talking to itself in the lilac hedge. The lanterns swung in the breeze that had a touch of autumn chill on its breath, and we sat in magic intoxication of the golden enchantment of the scene which never palled nor grew old to us. . . . Suddenly a woman began to sing and as we leaned over the rail of the gallery we saw it was the dragon-fly girl with Charpentier. The tone was exquisitely fine, soft and edgeless, like the voice of remote and mysterious sweetness. . . .

*Depuis le jour où je me suis donnée,
toute fleurie semble ma destinée.
Je crois rêver sous un ciel de féerie, . . .*

She only sang a few bars before Charpentier hushed her rather sharply we thought, for we were wild to hear more. It was a voice that caressed,

enchanted, played at will on nerves and heart.

"A-hh, no wonder he stopped her; It's from his opera. . . . How indiscreet!"

Phillipe sat white and trembling a little. "*Mon Dieu, mon Dieu!*" he whispered. "*Une voix merveilleuse!*" and following some impulse that he never could explain, he sprang to his feet and stood by the rail of the little gallery and sang Verlaine's *Chanson d'Automne*, which Charpentier set to music. It was a theatrical thing to do, but people often did theatrical things at La Joie. . . . It seemed the natural thing to do in that setting. . . .

Well, my throat chokes now as I recall his voice. We none of us knew that he could sing like that. . . . I doubt if he knew it himself, but he had us all half wild with delight and sadness and yearning . . . and . . . that was the last of Phillipe the painter, for Charpentier himself came bounding up the little stairway and he kissed Phillipe on both cheeks, and carried the boy off with him, and Jules, Razewill and I sat talking excitedly until long after midnight, when Felix came in and we had to go all over it again for his benefit. He seemed a little sad, but pleased. . . . "One must not fight one's destiny," he said pensively when we told him how poor Phillipe had tried to become a painter. We stayed until the old scrubwoman came knocking at our heels with her brush and pail and Papa Vachette stood down in the little garden looking rather cross as he yawned behind his hand.

Phillipe didn't come back that night nor near the studio the next day . . . in fact he never came back at all to stay. Jules and I went to all the cafés where we were in the habit of dining, but we could not find him. Finally we joined a group at Deux Sœurs, but we left them soon after dinner and went around to La Joie, where Papa Vachette greeted us with the intelligence that Phillipe and Jules awaited us on the gallery. The night was cloudy and there was a chill in the air and the gal-

leries and the garden were deserted. We drew up our chairs eager to hear the news that Phillipe was eager to tell.

He confessed that he had come to Paris to study music and had put in two years at it when he suddenly realized that his real genius lay in another direction. He told us this soberly and we bit our lips to keep from laughing in his face, for his canvases were the joke of the Quartier.

"But what will you," . . . he shrugged his handsome shoulders, "I am weak . . . at one little word of flattery I succumb, and there is one more indifferent singer in the world and a painter less . . . I confess to you *mes amis* I do it only because it is easy, and me, I do not love to work . . . I open my mouth and lo . . . the voice is there! But to paint, one must work, one must shed one's life's blood but in the end . . . ah!" Jules and I said, "ah!" too, and wagged our heads, but Razewill's eyes were quizzical as he shivered and suggested that we go inside.

It was the first time we had ever sat down in the outer room, which, except for the cashier, was deserted, but with sandwiches and a bottle of wine between us it really seemed rather cosy, and when Felix came in a little before twelve, dripping wet, for it had begun to rain we made him draw up a chair and repeated all Phillipe had told us.

"It is well," he said gravely. "Music is worth all the pictures ever painted," and as Jules and I stirred uneasily, he added softly, "Lise sang, you have heard her," he turned to Razewill, who nodded confirmation, "although she did not need to sing, or talk, or anything but just *be*. What is it you say?" he glanced at me, "Beauty is its own excuse for being. She was Beauty and I translated her for the whole world to see . . . But she was beautiful!" He sipped his absinthe and licked his dirty forefinger reflectively. "Well, here comes *le monstre*," he yawned, as Papa Vachette stuck his head in the door. Razewill ordered another half bottle of wine for us and a *petit verre* for Felix and we began to wish that we had

not stayed so late. . . . We found Lise a little tiresome, and then, too, the rain was beating against the windows and we could hear the hurried, liquid overflow of the eaves outside in the little garden.

Presently the scrubwoman came in with her mop and pail and the cashier folded up her bit of sewing and looked at us with such a determined eye that we all made a hurried movement to go, but as we waited for Jules to empty his glass, we heard a crash behind us, and the clatter of the mop as it struck against the tin pail. A dreadful groan came from the great, shapeless mass of flesh as the scrubwoman sank in a heap on the floor. We sprang to our feet, but Felix sat with his face like an antique mask of frozen horror, then with a cry that was more like a scream he was across the room.

"Lise!" he cried. "Lise, my little one, what is it! He drew the great, sodden face against his breast, and the breath came in thick gasps from the swollen lips while Felix chafed the rough, red hands and begged her for a word. Papa Vachette rushed in with a glass of spirits which he forced between her lips and the cashier bathed her temples with water. Presently the dull eyes flickered open. . . . "Felix!" she gasped.

"Yes, yes, Lise, my pretty one, I am here, here with thy dear head on my breast."

"But thou art good!" she whispered. . . . "All these good years together. . . . Always thou hast been true to me, even after all my youth and beauty were gone . . . after I was so bad and false to thee when I was young, but when I came back, sick, sorry, spoiled, thou was good and took me in . . . and all these years. . . . Now who will look out for thee when I am gone?" She

struggled to rise, but as she fell back, Felix soothed her.

"Hush, hush, always to me thou hast been beautiful. . . . What have I cared for that one little time. Do not all the years count, three and twenty it is . . . I . . . I . . . should not have let thee work so hard," he faltered, "but . . . but . . . it was thy wish, and up on the balcony when I have made the little joke about the scrubwoman, it was not of thee I spoke. . . . I have loved thee always, always . . ."

"But thou art good," she murmured. "Never once hast thou let me go home at night alone . . . never hast thou raised thy hand against me . . . never hast thou looked at this old, scarred face with aught but love and liking in thy eyes, thou, who might have been a great man if I had not broken thy heart when thou wast young. . . . But I have been happy with thee. . . . How I have been happy!" she whispered brokenly, as she sighed deeply and her head fell limply against his shoulder.

Razewill lifted the heavy inert form and laid it flat on the floor, then he came over to the counter where Jules, Philippe and I stood speechless.

"It is true. I looked carefully, and I could see that she spoke the truth. . . . It is Lise . . . but . . . *mon Dieu, mon Dieu!* . . ."

I don't know why this all comes back to-night unless it is my nephew's eagerness for Paris and the Quartier. Poor cub, he'll be disappointed, for the old Quartier is gone. If La Joie is still in existence I suppose they have electric lights and a stringed orchestra . . . but the romance of the place is gone. There isn't a Latin Quartier any more, not as it was in *my* day. . . . Youth . . . Love . . . Romance . . . all gone. . . . I feel a draft. . . .



THE TORCH

By Mrs. Cheever Meredith

"IN the life of a woman the child is the important factor," said Miss Breakspear easily. "Isn't it so?"

Cairn nodded in an abstracted way, but made no comment. He was reflecting that all the various women in whose lives he had somewhat figured had impressed him with the belief that man was the imperative figure. He felt ashamed to have been so readily persuaded. So there were women who tolerated men as a mere means to an end! It was an odd thought. He recalled various matters which seemed to contradict it.

"To pass on the torch," he murmured. "Hasn't some chap used that expression in relation to the subject?"

"Mr. Hitchens did," his sister informed him. She had been listening, rather than taking a part in the conversation during her adroit service of tea to the group on the terrace of the Trois Couronnes. She was a nice girl, who blinked shortsightedly as she talked. She had a smiling good nature which acted as a balm upon the hurts of others. She was very small, satisfied and concentrated, and openly enjoyed the security of the fact that all of her money which was not in rubber was in Aunts.

Miss Breakspear was looking past all trivialities straight into the solemn purple shadows which were beginning to veil the mountains across the lake, so like a sea of glass.

"One feels all of the deep things of life in Switzerland more keenly than in any other part of the world," she continued. "It is high land in more senses than one. One realizes how fu-

tile sin and passion are—how far removed from true realities."

A third girl watched Captain Cairn with a sly amusement. It tickled her sense of humor to hear matters which had too often been associated with his name so superbly relegated to the shallows. She wondered if he were not humbled. Miss Towner was addicted to what little Miss Cairn described as "movements," and was constantly occupied with the pamphlets which every post brought to her prolifically. She was tall and very bony, and she affected mannish attire, but she had a very pretty girlish face, and succeeded in being chic rather than imposing. She had not cut her long silken hair, but concealed it when possible, as if ashamed of its beauty.

She liked her companions with that liking which is heavily cemented, if not broken completely, by a month of daily intimacy. They were at the end of it now. At Vevey they were to separate. Captain Cairn was returning to his regiment, his sister to England. She and Jill Breakspear were also to drift apart, since the one was going to America, and the other to "lose" herself, as she expressed it, in the mountains of Switzerland.

She was quite right in thinking that the man of their party had had a new idea presented to him. Captain Cairn was considering the lofty spirit with which the American girl had disposed of sin and passion as matters not vitally ingrained in life, but apart—even magnificently so—from the existence of such a one as herself. She had even seemed to include the entire group of human beings at their tea table, of

which he was, he humbly felt, an unworthy member. She was sincere. He felt that. He had not been with her as informally during so many hours of the past four weeks without realizing that she was always sincere.

He watched her with a curious sense of being far removed from her, as far, he thought, as the evils of which she so lightly disposed. He felt that she spoke of those matters so glibly because of the very simple fact that for her they possessed no meaning, or at least not as much as the mountains upon which she was allowing her gaze to rest so persistently, those phantoms of the blue twilight, shrouded in silver. He considered her personal appearance. He had felt a continual pleasure in doing so. She was pale with an effect of porcelain illuminated from within, a lamp in which a vestal flame burned brightly. Seen in the half light of the hour her flaxen hair, skin, and entire toilette seemed of a dull white. And in all this whiteness the pupils of her eyes made two spots of velvet black, a curious effect, a sort of twin danger signal of temperament which contrasted her capacity for feeling with her present achievements of experience. Captain Cairn wondered very much in regard to these interesting contradictions, yet reproached himself for doing so, as if in some way he was insulting her pride and purity.

Miss Towner addressed him. "When will the war end?"

He felt that she did not expect him to decide this, but that she was giving him a chance to come out of his reverie, and he accepted it. He made no actual response, knowing that she had not thought he would do so, but contented himself with an utterance which he believed she would find acceptable.

"After it is over women like you will have their way."

His white, even teeth smiled from out of a face which had been burned throughout the summer by the sun of Flanders. He still wore a shade over the eyes which had been nearly blinded in August. To that affliction the three

girls with him had owed the pleasure of his society. In person he was very elegant, virile and kindly, while he spoke and moved with the assurance of one who knew that he had done the work of a man and was about to return to it.

"Perhaps," he added humorously, "after the war there will be no men."

Miss Towner nodded gravely, and then united their train of thought with that which had occupied her friend, Jill Breakspear, before she had bestowed it upon the opposite mountains, by murmuring, "There will be the children. The race will not perish, for women will insist upon their right to bear them."

The nice sister who had played the rôle of chaperone for the group during the month found this stupendous. "But who will marry us if the men are all dead?"

Jill, whose attention was now drawn from the beauty of abstract things to the ideas of her companions, stared at her. "Marry?" she complained. "Have we no rights of motherhood outside of marriage?"

Miss Towner gazed at her admiringly. She thought her superb. Here were advanced ideas, if you liked. "But—granted that we have—children must have a father of some sort?"

Her friend looked troubled. It seemed as if even nature conspired against women. After a pause in which it was apparent that she found her thoughts difficult to adjust in a manner which entitled them to expression, she replied indifferently: "Things will arrange themselves in some way. The race will not die out."

She spoke with an emphasis which had not been born of the moment, and had rather the air of mounting a hobby. Captain Cairn leaned toward her, consciously desirous of studying the face of a high priestess of a new religion. What was all this? Miss Towner smiled with lips that trembled with a joy of success, for it seemed that she had provoked the result she

sought. She lowered the lids over her bright brown eyes, after looking at the man and then away again quickly, as if she feared to betray her amusement. She pursed her mouth, nodded until speech seemed unnecessary to express the words: "Now you have it! Now you see what man is coming to! When we have reformed the world—cleaned the House of Life—pure women will look upon the subject of sex as she does. Hear her!"

The lady of the teapot murmured: "But first—votes."

Her brother added jestingly: "With the hammer in hand—"

He was interrupted by a chorus—"Oh—hammers!" The three were insulted. They had never gone in for hammers. And he knew it. He had libelled their manners.

He quickly changed front in returning to what lay at the heart of Jill Breakspear.

"You feel"—he addressed her directly and with deliberation—"that the right of motherhood exists outside of—what you believe to be—obsolete marriage laws?"

She regarded him steadily, lip a-quiver, eyes sweet and clear. "I believe that motherhood is—should be—and perhaps always has been—the ultimate ruling passion of our sex."

"And man but fulfills his destiny when he becomes a father?"

"Exactly." She divorced a rose from the late blossoms which overhung the length of stone balustrade beside her. "The love between the sexes is—or should be—at the service of the race—a thing more impersonal, more selfless."

She ruffled the rose with her slim fingers, and the man thought of the bees. She wanted a love like that, then. He was afraid to look at his sister. He knew she was shocked. But when he managed to do so he found himself mistaken, for she was proudly regarding her friend as if Jill were voicing a revolution which might be secretly obsessing the entire world of women. He felt astounded. So that is what they

think! They want to get rid of us, he thought. Zounds!

"Why should it be so evil a thing," she went on, "if love should simply pause in passing—for a mere moment? Nature has had her way—the woman has completed herself in a resulting motherhood."

"And man may then pass on alone, unregretted?" (Where had he heard this sort of thing termed infidelity?)

"Why not?" asked the girl tranquilly, fixing her gaze upon him. She was as bold as a boy and as pure as a virgin.

Captain Cairn felt himself blushing deeply. Were all the so-called new women as clean-minded as these three? He felt himself to be unfit for any association with them—he and his fellows. Jove! The end of the world had come.

"One feels very insignificant," he muttered.

He continued to regard her, puzzled, a little afraid of her, and very much so of himself. She is the latest sort of woman, he thought. And I am a very old-fashioned man. He could not let it rest at that. He made them all talk. He drew them out, led them to express their theories.

A waiter came and took away the tea tray. His sister went to write a letter before changing for dinner. And then, a last favour from the hour, Miss Towner followed her, smiling as if in a plot of mischief. He was glad when she went.

If these fair ladies were right (he compared them to those of the Decameron in point of frank speech), his life had been without meaning. He was a failure. He had not given any woman the satisfaction of making her a mother. He mused upon these things with mingled chagrin and rebellion. He reflected that no one had been honest with him—that is—if these three at Vevey were in any way representative of their sex.

For several moments the two who lingered at the table overlooking the lake and its growing mystery of twilight were silent. The air had laid

a chill upon the roses and they were odourless, the dusk had robbed them of colour, and they were pale in their crimson. The girl opposite him had become indistinct in outline, a fragile shape. Yet Cairn reflected that both were there, although hidden by the dimness as stars by daylight. Meanwhile sex and personality receded from him in such a way as to leave him unembarrassed. He felt himself free from any necessity of conventional utterances. He and the girl before him were liberated—for an hour—from the trammels of a social code of speech.

Finally he said deliberately: "And you yourself?"

She was puzzled. "Myself?"

He tried to explain. "I have never heard a woman—like yourself—talk as you do. You mean all that you say?"

She thought a moment, then said: "Yes. But you mean more than you ask."

"More than I dare ask."

"You would like to ask me if I—personally—would have the courage of my convictions?"

"Just that. You have put it into words. You would endorse your beliefs by your acts?"

"I have often wondered if I should do so," she said as if speaking to herself. "I wonder—"

He changed his position restlessly, and asked her if she would permit him a cigarette. He did not offer one to her, as he knew that she did not smoke. He seemed to be waiting for her to speak, and tossing his match after a stray moth, he settled his slight form into the angle of his chair as if more and more at his ease.

He watched her in patient expectancy, thinking her delicate person about as real in the darkness as a silken scarf might have been, left by some careless hand lying where she was sitting. But he was conscious of a something more strenuous in her nature than silk. He wondered if she had not that thing, in regard to which he was skeptical, a soul.

Presently Jill disclosed her creed. "You are logical in asking me how far my belief would carry me," she said. "I never answer that I do not know, although I believe myself to be sincere. Society as it is organized to-day is a thing which I despise. My position is this: Here am I—at thirty—a woman—why not say it—vulgarly rich—absurdly rich. I have no one to consider but myself. My parents are dead—they died when I was a child. I am independent in fortune and circumstances—responsible to no one for what I might do or be. Can one doubt there are many like me? I have never yet met a man to whom I should have been willing to tie myself for life with the present existing beliefs in the duties of a wife. (Cairn stirred uneasily as if to interrupt her, but he ended by sinking once more into the attitude of a listener.) I have never been tempted to renounce my personal liberty. (The girl went on.) Yet—children are a passion with me. I adore them. And I must give up all such joys because I cannot find a man to whom I could conscientiously vow all that is required by the laws of to-day. I could not swear all that I should be asked to swear."

"As society is constituted at present—" But Captain Cairn was unable to disclose that which was probably a warning of some sort, for he was interrupted.

"Society!" cried a scornful voice. "If I could but express what I think of its inconsistencies!"

The man recalled his certainties that the lady had lived presumably quite in accordance with all that society had demanded of her. But was he to conclude that such concessions were at an end? "She is the purest woman I have ever met," he said to himself, "yet she means every word which she speaks. She might not be as well versed in the subject which she attacked so boldly as he was, but she certainly gave the impression of being ready to dare much. She was trying to convince herself that she was willing to venture. Was she,

then, mad? Not upon any other subject.

"And, if such a woman—a woman strong enough to carry out such a propaganda—personally—should meet the man she elected to be the father of her child—would a mere attraction suffice, without what is commonly called—love?"

She hesitated for the space of a long-drawn breath, then replied in a tone which indicated an actual anguish in her desire to be truthful.

"Love!" she repeated. "Is not what is called love most often an infatuation—an obsession? Does it not too often prompt a woman to give a poor father to her child? Has she the right to do so in order to gratify her own inclination? How dare she burden it with a miserable inheritance of broken health, or of a moral taint, for the mere reason of her own weak affection for one who is unworthy? Women are fond and foolish. It is conceivable that one might feel love for a man who was beyond the pale—even depraved."

"Men have been saved by such women."

"Perhaps. But what about the children of such a union? Had the woman any right to risk all that might come to them? Will not the children win when woman can be taught to look coolly in the face of the problem? Should she not say to herself: 'I am to be a mother. It is for that that destiny has brought this hour. For that nature has fitted me. I must take care that the child that is to be has the right father. Is this the right man?'"

"If not?"

"If not—then a being is brought into the world with inherited bad tendencies, with weak nerves, imperfect tissues, and an inevitable doom of failure. She must see to it that she is more fair to her children than that."

"And the best that she may hope for it—granted that she selects the right father—in a purely animal sense—what is the best that she may hope for it at the hands of society?"

"Ah," cried Miss Breakspear, "always 'society'! Society must be brought to its senses!"

Her pronunciation of this decree was noble in tone. Society, he felt, would have admitted itself to be a worm had it been present. As its representative he made the admission for himself individually. A worm. Yes.

"But," he insisted, "since society has not as yet been brought to its senses, what has such a child born out of wedlock—to expect?"

Miss Breakspear looked here and there, and drew a long breath. "I," said she, "should hide myself at the ends of the earth if I had such a child. I should rear it to despise conventions, to give its life for the uplifting of its fellow men."

Captain Cairn pondered upon this. He found it confusing, even illogical. He suspected his companion of being merely feminine. However, he discovered that he had strength for further investigation.

"And pardon me if I seem too bold—but you interest me more than I can say—would she—the mother—feel nothing for the man—further than the realization that he fulfilled her requirements as a father for her child—those of the right sort of father?" His anxiety seemed curiously personal, but sufficiently humble.

Jill looked a little startled, as one well might who had overcome all selfishness in life. She answered rather loftily, "She should think first and perhaps last of the child."

"I see. The father could—pass." He added to himself: "Like a bee." And felt more and more humble.

At this moment they were disturbed by a page who bore a message to Miss Breakspear from Miss Cairn, being merely the warning that it was nearly eight, that they dined at that hour, and that if she expected to change she should hurry. The warning was scribbled upon a card. She rose with a pretty flurry of draperies, and an anxiety as to the necessity to make a dinner toilette which convinced Captain

Cairn that upon some ordinary feminine planes her nature functioned normally. He was, however, irritated with his sister. She had interrupted an investigation which had been interesting if profitless.

It was not until after dinner that he found a further opportunity to pursue the subject in which he took such an interest.

The little group of friends had gone to the wharf to meet the nine o'clock boat, and were sauntering homeward along the esplanade beneath the round shadows of the umbrella-like trees which dot the place at regular intervals. Throughout the length of that promenade people were moving, as they were, staring across the mirror of Lac Léman at the moon-tipped Dent du Midi, or at the line of hotels upon the other side whose walls were still garlanded with roses, and where coloured lights twinkled amid the palms, and from the many rows of balconies.

By an agile and really intelligent series of maneuvers Cairn had been enabled to secure Miss Breakspear as his companion, and to linger well in the rear of the others, who were chattering with friends who had come on to Vevey from Geneva. The girl seemed not unwilling, but he could not decide if she were not still absorbed in thought with the so recent and inevitable talk of the Castle of Chillon, of Byron, of Coppet and the love of Madame de Staël for her Constant. These were the ghosts which walk at such hours to haunt the English, at that time and place.

But Cairn felt the silence between himself and his companion become gradually empty of such intruders. Little by little their footsteps became rhythmic and he knew that subtle links were forming anew between them, those unseen ties of thoughts.

That afternoon it had been she who had talked and he who had listened. Now it was he who broke the silence and who spoke with a lack of reserve very unusual for him.

At first, in a tone of discouragement,

he alluded to his part in the struggle in Flanders. From this he wandered to bitter denouncement of war as war. He admitted that he feared every conceivable curse would be visited upon the earth before the ghastly sum of loss would be added up by time. He confessed his belief that he, with the recovery of his eyesight, had merely gained anew the ability to die. It was all he could do for his country. He was glad that he might at least do as much. He told of the talks in hours when each officer friend admitted cheerfully, yet with finality, that what they were doing would but form a stepping stone for those coming after them. He spoke as if he were about to enter a room from which, after the closing of the door, he should never return. He had no air of whining about it. He was stating a fact. That was all.

"Do you say these things to your sister?"

"No."

The girl who listened to him was bewildered. "Yet you do not hesitate to give me the pain of listening?"

"You do not understand why?"

She hesitated, then said: "No."

"I will tell you. This afternoon—as you talked—I felt that your eyes looked far into what may perhaps be eternity. I may be going there. And I am going in all the strength of my early manhood as thousands are passing every day. But many of them go without a thought of the oblivion they are entering, and others—" He paused as if unable to frame his next words.

"And others?" she repeated gently after him. "Yes?"

"Others leave behind them hostages to fate—those who will live on after them."

"Children," she said after a moment. "I think I understand."

"Not yet," he replied. "Listen. What do you know of my life—of that little span which lies between my eighteenth year and now? I am twenty-eight. Ten years. What do you know of it?"

"Very little. That you were married very early. That something happened. That—"

"That I do not live with my wife?"

"Yes."

He sighed as he looked at her, a strange wistfulness in his gaze. "I married at twenty-one a girl whose entire antecedents were such as you described this afternoon. There was madness on both lines of inheritance." He waited a moment, then said in a tone of bitterness: "She is alive, you know. She is in a French *maison de santé*. She is normal in body, but amuses herself by writing love letters to every man she ever knew. They are not sent, of course. They are held—destroyed by the nurses. But I saw some of them the last time I visited her. I insisted. They were disgusting. I have often thought that I might have gone on loving her had her madness taken any other form. But a man can't love a woman like that."

"And is there no hope?"

"None."

The girl took his arm with a touch which resembled a caress. "I am sorry for you," she said with a little thrill of tenderness in her voice. "I see. I understand. You would feel less bitter if there were but one little life to live on after you—to carry on your name. And that cannot be."

"No. That cannot be. Besides the name has never been a great one, it dies with me. And the old place went under the hammer the other day. But I have had another thought."

She looked up into his face, waiting for him to continue, and he stared down moodily into her innocent eyes. The moonlight, and the lamps of the esplanade, made all as light as day, and he could see her face perfectly. There was no evasion in it of what was coming.

They were just opposite one of the long benches which stand in rows along the walk, one which was in full light, unshadowed by a tree.

"Let us sit here," he said abruptly. "The others have gone on ahead and

will not miss us. Give me ten minutes to ask what I have to ask."

She hesitated. "A little unconventional," she murmured. "What would people say—if they were to see us?"

He spoke roughly, surprised. "You! You ask what people would say—you care—after all that you said this afternoon? Tell me at once—were you insincere? Were you?"

"No," said she, looking at him in a startled way. "I was not insincere. But I think—it is easier to think unconventionally in big things—things which are magnificently free—than to do some little, little thing—which does not matter—which does not change anything—but which one has been warned not to do through years of worldly training. That is all I meant. But I don't mind. I will sit here with you. Come!"

And she was the first to seat herself there upon the bench. He sat beside her after a moment, not close, but so that he might, by sitting sideways, see her face without turning his head. He threw away the cigarette he had been smoking and did not light another. He was near enough to see her breast rise and fall with each breath. Jill was slender, yet her broad bosom proclaimed her the ideal mother of nature's plan. Her throat was young looking. She was thirty years old—two years his senior. He thought that if a man wanted children he would try to marry this woman. She was graceful and strong, kind and true. And she had said that she had been sincere that afternoon. He prayed quite simply that his courage might not fail him. Morally, he felt as clean as if earthly passion were a frozen thing. At his side was Woman as men sometimes dream they may find her. He forgot that he had had something of the Centaur about him. He forgot his forbears the Tiger and the Ape. He drew a long breath in an altitude which was not, to him, a familiar one.

She was quite unembarrassed, quite at her ease, tranquilly waiting for him to speak. He saw that she was musing

over what he had already said, and that her manner was that of one who leaned in thoughts of sympathy toward a friend. The situation was of the heights. Morally, their plane of communion was entirely free from any impulse prompted by the flesh.

He felt lost in the pure bliss resulting from his new-found capacity of happiness of such a sort. He—a new self—found himself alone in the night with such a woman as this. Common sense, the mental training of a lifetime, became unreal things. The dream, the defiance of man-made laws, seemed natural, almost inevitable.

Just as a child might do, he stretched out his hand for hers, and she as frankly gave it up to his, where it lay warm and fragrant, a gift of her friendship.

Then: "You were serious in all you said this afternoon. You repeat that you were sincere. You meant it all—honestly meant it. It is true then that you are capable of acting nobly at such a height?"

"Of such a defiance of social creeds?" she said, as if recalling something which had not lingered in her mind as it had in his. "Why not?" she added slowly, but as if sure of herself and understanding his thoughts. She spoke with a magnificent boldness, secure in her maiden cleanliness of mind and body.

The young man hesitated. He wished to speak as he should like to be remembered to have done. He felt that this was to be an unforgettable night for both of them. What he succeeded in saying was to be recalled after he could speak no more.

So he hesitated, and at last when he did speak it was to pick up a thread which he had lost. "You have seen that—for me—there can be no child to carry on my name."

"It is very sad," she murmured sweetly.

"Yet—there is another way—a thing which would mean very much to me. For to know that—somewhere—some woman—some beloved and holy wom-

an—held in her arms my pledge to the race—held my very secret self—not of my name—no—but of my flesh—a thing which was to live on and perhaps profit by the sacrifice we men of today are making to ensure the future—that would be something. That would be a great deal, Jill. It would be her secret. After the clay had shut my eyes she would be the only one on earth to know the truth. But somehow—I feel that—over there—I should be allowed to know, too. So if I were to meet a woman such as you have described, I think I should find the courage to say to her: 'I have the right to ask you to pass on the torch,' as I expressed it this afternoon. For I am sound in all that heredity may require. I am—as men go—a clean man, Should I not have the right then—to say these things—if—I were to meet such a woman?"

"Such a woman would feel herself given a great mission—elected to a noble destiny."

He saw that she spoke with an entire absence of all self-consciousness such as might relate his words to herself. He was puzzled. He told himself that he was staggered. How be more explicit?

Her hand still lay in his, a pledge of affection if of nothing more. Her eyes were gazing at the heights of the opposite mountains much as they had gazed that afternoon. It was as if in looking into the distance the girl had gone there. He felt suddenly alone, chilled, and uncertain of her and himself. She seemed as composed, as wrapped fast in her security as if he had been a man of marble, instead of a being whose heart was beginning to shake him with its heavy beating.

She was very sweet. But in her person was an unassailable purity which refused to yield to her expressed willingness to give herself up. Suddenly he learned forward and placed his other hand upon that of hers which he already held, clasping it closely between both of his. He felt it flutter

in an uncertain protest. Then she withdrew it.

She turned slowly and regarded him with a long look of a strange character, a look which seemed to study him, to discover things as yet unknown to her. He felt that sex itself was assuming a new meaning to her. There was no anger in her eyes, no resentment. But she was arriving subtly at a knowledge of which nothing in her maiden years until that hour had given any hint. Slowly, in a deep flood, her pale face darkened with a blush. But she did not turn away from him. He saw her lip tremble pitifully, but still she regarded him, dumb with the weight of a new wisdom, a wisdom which he knew had come to her through him.

If the man had felt that he had reached a height before that moment, it was nothing compared to that to

which he was lifted when he at last understood her.

Her lips and eyes continued to question him. As he arose to his feet he turned to raise her from the seat where they had been sitting. He took both her hands quite as a brother might have done. He affected a gentle gayety.

"The world is not ready for such beautiful things," he said, smiling at her tenderly. "But it was a wonderful talk. I shall never forget it."

He drew her hand into his arm and they walked slowly away.

"I did not understand," she faltered, "until to-night. And—I am not good enough."

"I know. You did not understand," he replied with extreme gentleness. "My dear—if you had been a better woman, I should have been a worse man."



THEREFORE

By Blanche Shoemaker Wagstaff

MY new love came to me and said:
 "Beloved! what tears are these you shed
 At dawn and eventide?
 I bring you beauty manifold
 To crown you as my bride."

I kissed my new love as I said:
 "Lo, I am thine to keep,
 Altho' my first love is not dead
 And therefore I must weep. . . ."



NO man is wholly devoid of prejudices. Even the most democratic of us dislike kissing a woman directly after her husband.

PANIC

By Robert Welles Ritchie

THE subway train stalled under the river. During the first five minutes papers were read unperturbedly. Then the lights sickened and winked out. Darkness—sooty, ponderable darkness . . .

So quiet was it in the middle car that somewhere out in the steel envelope holding up the river the drip of water sounded: the drip of water falling into water. Everybody of the hundred and ten sitting and standing heard that lisping murmur. A newspaper crackled. A girl giggled. The initial spell of silence was broken, the dripping sound obliterated.

Five minutes passed.

"Don't you get that dampish smell?" came the query in a voice meant to be hushed but filed sharp by a sense of unrest, now general.

"Only sixty feet of water overhead, kiddo," was the volunteer witticism of joshers.

"Oh!"

Somebody sneezed; cackling laughter all along the aisle. A bull-voiced tough began to warble, "Oh Why Is the Ocean So Near the Shore?" But the song languished, died.

Drip-drip-drip.

A man read his watch by matchlight and said, "Ten minutes." Along the aisle his timing passed in whispers.

Then came the conductor, shoving and groping from car to car.

"Sall right—no danger," he bawled, in his voice something appearing to grapple with a condition yet non-existent. Just as he reached the far end of the middle car, where the crowd was thinnest about the door, his foot hit an obstruction. A crash, a curse and he passed on.

Again, out of the black vault, that whisper of water.

"Mama, my foots 's all wet!"

"What's that, honey? Why, the floor's all water."

"The kid's right. My feet are sopping." This in a man's voice, unsteady.

Then from the tough who had sung—a bellow:

"River's got us! *Ev-verybody out!*"

After that, in the sooty black, madness . . .

When, at the first Manhattan station, they had cleared the car of the maimed and trampled and five dead, they came upon a five-gallon spring-water container, overturned and empty.



WHEN two women strike up a sudden friendship, it is a sign that they have found a third woman that both detest.

SPOOF RIVER ANTHOLOGY

By Gordon Seagrove

1—MYRTLE FINK

I AM Myrtle Fink, first name Foofoo,
Daughter of old Tom Fink, who used to do his drinking
By nightfall, near the gasworks,
And of Mrs. Fink, my mother, who was born Lottie Leftover, in Michigan, but
moved away.
(Peace be to your soul, Lottie Leftover Fink; you never had any after the old
man left the gasworks!)

I was a happy girl indeed, and went about bathing the dishes,
Teaching the cat proprieties and watering the geranium,
Which was all my father left me.
Then one day came unto the village a city fellow.
His name was Hopwith Zeal, and he taught me the one-step
And my shins are sore and aching, and I know no happiness.
Curses on you, Hopwith Zeal!
Hop with zeal?
I cannot!

2—RICHARD SOSORRY

I knew you first, Richard Sosorry, as a scholarly weakling
When you were ten and I was twelve.
Your muscles were puny, and you exhaled the odor of sanctity as you walked
dreamily by, reading Corinthians.
And so I defended you.
Once, Richard, you will remember in your villa in Canada,
I walloped one of your oppressors—by name one Mike McDuff,
Whose father, Brian McDuff, begat him with the connivance of Mrs. McDuff,
Now dead and decently buried,
(Thanks to the county).
It nearly ruined me, Richard, but I did it, for I loved you,
And with pride I saw you take your seat in the First National,
Knowing that now you'd found your world.
And all my admiration I gave unto you freely.
And what did you do?
When "the Midnight Maidens" came, you eloped with Gladys Gayone,
Begot in 1890 by Klaw & Erlanger,
In 1895 by Al. H. Woods,
And this year by Flo Ziegfield.
Took her, and the savings of those who loved you, and fled
To Canada, where you now reside,
Forcing me to resume work on the milk-route.
But you shall pay, Richard Sosorry;
For some day people will quit drinking milk,
And I shall come to Canada!

3—GEORGE CHRISTMAN

I owe you much, George Christman.
 Lean of frame, kind of eye, you won my trust,
 And taught me the folly of lending money.
 For when I was thirsty I gave you my last quarter,
 For you told me you were hungry.
 And one hour later I saw you drinking ale with Old Jim Spencer
 In a nearby *wirtschaft*—
 Jim Spencer, to whom I also gave a quarter.
 So I learned my lesson.
 I owe you much, George Christman
 And you still owe me a quarter.

4—JENNY JONES

Jenny Jones, you were a nice girl,
 Fair and fragile as the dawn,
 And I loved you in spite of your father, who had twice been sent to the Keeley
 Institute,
 Where they said his case was hopeless.
 And loving you, Jenny Jones, I asked you to be mine,
 Asked you to shift your faith from God to me,
 When I was clerking in Sam Fall's shoe store,
 Corner of Main and Buchanan Streets,
 (When it did not rain.)
 And you said yes.
 So I loved you, Jenny Jones, with all the ardor of first love,
 But you broke my heart so badly that I had to leave the store;
 Yet you taught me a great truth:
 That man is strongest without Woman.
 For on the day of our wedding you eloped with Handsome Jack,
 A cut-glass salesman who promised you—ah, many things:
 A leopard coat, a limousine, a minister and more.
 Poor Gertrude, if you had only come to me then!
 I could have told you that Handsome Jack owed the dentist
 Ten dollars.
 But girls who sing in the Methodist choir are so simple.
 You are probably singing in a cabaret now, Jenny,
 And if instead it is the Salvation Army,
 And I see you, I shall drop a dime,
 Into your tambourine.



THE bridegroom goes almost unnoticed at a wedding. It is always possible to find ten women who envy the bride to one bachelor who envies the bridegroom.



THE SACRED GARTER

By Maurice Joy

I UNDERSTAND that there are millions of people who still derive a preposterous amount of illicit emotion from the mention of a garter. Indeed, I remember that, as an adolescent, I was introduced to a venerable lady of Stoke Pogis who had become a republican because of a newspaper article which described how the late Queen Victoria, with her own hands, had attached that symbol of an illustrious order to the calf of a statesman. Anyone who had the pleasure of Queen Victoria's acquaintance could have assured the sensitive lady of Stoke Pogis that such an indelicacy was impossible; but no such friend was available, and I fear she went to her grave in a political faith which, having been a governess in her youth, she naturally abhorred.

I have also been told that there are living many people who believe in the impish superstition of black magic, and that such are prone to look for confirmation of their faith in any weird story they read.

I wish, therefore, to say that in the story I am about to tell there is no preaching of any thesis whatsoever nor any idea of ministering to illicit emotions; it is but the simple record of an extraordinary happening which befell a quite ordinary bishop upon the course of whose life a garter unexpectedly obtruded itself.

I

It was not long after the beginning of the war that the Right Reverend Percy James Fitz-James Hamilton decided to come to America after a rather strenuous recruiting campaign in his diocese of Lliccieth in Wales.

"Your lordship positively must take

a rest," his physician had said. "You have been working far too hard, and, I fear, unprofitably."

"Yes," his lordship had assented. "It has been a grave disappointment, Simpson, a grave disappointment. I can only say that it has confirmed me in the opinion I have always held of this diocese; it is but little removed from nonconformity. I don't wish to speak uncharitably, but I feel glad that I have kept myself as much aloof from it as was seemly. Only the stern call of duty induced me to endeavor to awaken it at least to its patriotic duty."

His failure had overwhelmed the Bishop. He knew himself to be that fine flower of diplomacy, the ecclesiastical man of the world, but he had been powerless with his miners. His pride no less than his patriotism was hurt. It was the first failure of his career. Almost without imagination or scholarship, he had been a success because of his family, his ability to look wise and well, and a reputation for asceticism which caused him to be identified with the High Church party.

A darling of society, it was no wonder that when his proposed holiday was announced he should receive an invitation from Boston. It came from the very flower of a New England lineage, one of those families which, from their eeries in Beacon Street and Brookline, watch vaguely the Irish sea that is abrading their beloved shelters.

When the invitation came by cable a few days after his lordship's intention to visit America had been announced in the *Morning Post*, the Bishop said to his secretary:

"I have much distrust of a society which, when the best is said of it, remains composed of the progeny of Dis-

senters, but I met Mrs. Lowell-Cabot-Lowell at the Duchess of Puffsboro's, and it would not do to slight her Grace."

Indeed, it would not. Slighting duchesses is not the kind of adventure to which bishops are prone, and it was more than likely if the Conservatives ever came back to power that the Duchess would be a useful friend at court when his lordship sought a more fashionable diocese.

So he wrote in his own graceful way, with that atmosphere of ecclesiastical atmosphere upon which he prided himself—when conversing with non-churchmen—but with sufficient learning to flatter a Bostonian. The Bishop was quite proud of the fact that he was acquainted with the pedantic peculiarities of Boston. He had heard of them and of the villainies of Tammany Hall; otherwise American affairs had never contaminated his mind.

"But," as he said to his secretary, "no doubt Baedeker has published a guide to the States which I can read on my way across."

II

WE may pass quickly over his first evening in Boston. Knowing that his lordship would be tired, Mrs. Lowell-Cabot-Lowell (Did I mention the fact that she was a widow of seventy; his lordship, by the way, was a bachelor of fifty-five) had only the intimate family circle to dinner. It consisted of her brother, a Harvard professor, who visited Oxford every year to perfect his manner, and his brother's wife, who wrote poems for the Boston *Transcript* and had published an essay to prove that genius had frequently existed apart from immorality. The war was naturally the chief topic of conversation, the Bishop finding the Lowell-Cabot-Lowells "extraordinarily well informed," much better informed than the trading classes in England. Next to the war the Bishop's impressions of America were the theme, the Lowell-Cabot-Lowells listening eagerly and finding that "it was very nice of his lordship to say so."

All this is meant to shew you that the garter concerning which my story is written found itself in an excellent household, well-bred and deferential. It lay upstairs in a sacred case in a very sacred room, among many treasures which Mrs. Lowell-Cabot-Lowell, in her journeyings, had accumulated. The room was called "The Thesaurus."

It was, I may say for the sake of propriety, no ordinary garter. Mrs. Lowell-Cabot-Lowell had purchased it in a Cairo antique shop, and had been assured that, according to the desert legends, it had once belonged to the Queen of Sheba. I do not say that the keeper of the shop, born of a Frenchman's dalliance with an Arab maiden, had never read Gerard de Nerval. I merely record the fact that he sold the Queen of Sheba's garter to Mrs. Lowell-Cabot-Lowell for a hundred dollars and supplied her with a picturesquely written pedigree for it. It was a circular garter, of a peculiarly stretchable kind of leather; but what made it remarkable was that, instead of the ordinary buckle, there stood out from it a brass band in which was set the bluest of blue stones, something more opaque than a turquoise. Moreover the band, about a sixteenth of an inch deep, was most rudely hammered, the work of a common smith, and the lovely stone, instead of being cut with reverence, had actually been chopped to fit the band. When Mrs. Lowell-Cabot-Lowell brought it home to Boston she had a yearning to procure an ebony case for it with a brass lid, upon which Egyptian hieroglyphics would be carved. But for family reasons the garter was concealed until a learned archaeologist wrote three articles on it for the *Transcript*, explaining its symbolism and proving that it was much older than the Queen of Sheba's day and had probably been worn by some vestal priestess of a prehistoric religion. He added that it was only fitting that such a venerable relic should find a home with one of the oldest families in Boston.

Such was the garter. It was not shewn to the Bishop the first night of

his stay lest he might be fatigued, and for the same reason the family retired at ten instead of ten-thirty. Mrs. Lowell-Cabot-Lowell had expected the Bishop to say the family prayer, but his lordship did not do so because he had a horror of talking shop outside his pulpit.

III

"GEE-WHIZZ, Peter," said Mary Devlin, the Irish housemaid, to Peter Jones, the English footman, on the landing outside the Thesaurus at eleven o'clock the next morning. "Gee-whizz, Peter, did you see the Bishop with the breeches—sure I nearly died with the laughing."

It was part of Peter's daily concern to suppress the impertinences of the housemaid, and he looked at her with disdain.

"It is the custom of bishops in England," he said with a cold sneer, "to wear gaiters."

"In the house?"

"Always, I understand."

"Well, devil an Irish bishop ever wore a gaiter unless 'twas after the hounds. All the same he's a fine figure of a man."

"The Irish bishops," began Peter, lifting his careful eyebrows. But the maid stopped him.

"Whist, aroo," she said. "They're coming up; she's going to show him the sour-house."

The footman discreetly retired to the other end of the hall, but Mary Devlin continued to dust enthusiastically in the neighborhood of the Thesaurus. Something told her that at last the lid of the ebony case would be lifted and the garter taken out for inspection. Perhaps then her mistress would forget to lock the case and a dearly cherished ambition would be gratified. For Mary had long secretly coveted the delight of wearing the Queen of Sheba's garter even for a moment.

Mrs. Lowell-Cabot-Lowell and the Bishop appeared at the head of the stairs. She had been puzzled as to how

to introduce the subject of the garter. Was it quite proper? It might have been risked if the Bishop were a married man, but since he was a bachelor—well, it was a ticklish point. Luckily her dilemma was solved just in time by a chance remark of his lordship.

"I am so glad," he said, "to see by your paper that our beloved king has just given his Grace the Duke of Fulham the garter."

That, in vulgar parlance, let Mrs. Lowell-Cabot-Lowell in.

"By the way, Dr. Hamilton," she essayed, "I have a most interesting garter."

Her bashfulness made her stop, and the Bishop looked a little surprised.

"I mean . . . I mean it's a relic," she went on. "It's the Queen of Sheba's garter. I bought it at Cairo from an antique dealer."

"How interesting . . ." said his lordship, pausing for a moment to catch sight of himself in an Empire mirror. "How very interesting."

Thus encouraged, Mrs. Lowell-Cabot-Lowell led the way to the Thesaurus. I ought to state that she was not herself of Boston blood, but was the daughter of a Chicago meat-packer who had married her into this distinguished family in the days when the aspirations of American heiresses did not yet run to monocles. This explains why she was so nervous in crises; not even the long and unrelenting labors of her husband had given her the perfect manners which the Lowell-Cabot-Lowells had inherited from their ancestors of the lower middle classes who travelled bathless in the Mayflower. As the Duchess, her friend, had once said to her between a cigarette and a whiskey and soda:

"Please be natural. Americans are so interesting when they are natural. Those perfect manners are found only among the lower middle classes; elsewhere familiarity has bred contempt for them."

Mrs. Lowell-Cabot-Lowell opened the door of the Thesaurus with pardonable pride. The light was dim; there was an air of sanctuary about the place.

Eminently respectable paintings hung on the walls; not a nude disgraced the scene. Priceless books were neatly arranged; Chinese gods cast subtle eyes on Tanagra dancers; and Egyptian tear-bottles stood ready to receive the sad confidences of cinquecento angels. Everything was there that was proper or at least that was not obviously improper. There was even a Degas in a dark corner, to which Mrs. Lowell-Cabot-Lowell's brother's wife had not yet become reconciled. For of course you will have guessed by this time that Mrs. Lowell-Cabot-Lowell's sister-in-law had accompanied her on all her trips and directed all the purchases. Naturally Mrs. Lowell-Cabot-Lowell in return had paid all expenses.

The only things she had bought of her own volition were the Degas and the garter. They had both been disapproved by her mentor, but they represented the only occasions on which during her long life Mrs. Lowell-Cabot-Lowell had been able to escape from the Boston tyranny; for it was continually impressed on her that as a Lowell-Cabot-Lowell she could have no will of her own, but must live according to the will of the family. Its apostolic succession must not be endangered by any rebely.

The Degas would certainly never be forgiven; the garter was tolerated only when the professor of archæology proved in the *Transcript* that it had once helped to preserve the modesty of a virginal priestess.

I do not attempt to explain Mrs. Lowell-Cabot-Lowell's taste in giving the garter, thereupon, the most prominent place in the *Thesaurus*; but I suppose that, inheriting strong practical tendencies from her meat-packing ancestors, she had decided that it was the one useful thing in the place. Had she been younger in the era of the slit skirt she would probably have adorned her leg with it, for, without ever daring to express it since she met the Lowell-Cabot-Lowells, she had always been a little proud of her leg.

The Bishop cast his eyes around the

room. Art frankly bored him—at best it was an affectation, at worst a disease. He did not include portraiture in that category when the subject was sufficiently distinguished, that is when its name might be found in Debrett. His hostess had a few such, one of them of that very Duchess at whose house she had first met the Bishop. His lordship paused before the portrait:

"Ah, the dear woman, so beautiful, so kind. Do you know that only a week ago she spent three hours at Victoria Station shaking hands with the brave fellows going to the war. She is a very good friend of mine, indeed an intimate friend. She has been good enough to say that I ought to have Canterbury . . . but that, of course . . ." He smiled a suave, self-deprecating smile, but it was obvious that he knew Canterbury needed a man of the world, a man of practical religion, rather than a theologian.

"I am sure they will make you Archbishop soon," burst out his hostess enthusiastically. "I feel they must."

"Curiously too," his lordship went on in his enthusiasm for talking about himself, "she thinks I ought to marry. But that is a matter which has never interested me."

He would have gone on, but his hostess tactfully led him before the sacred garter. The moment his eyes fell on it they brightened.

"Ah, here," he said, "is the famous garter."

Mrs. Lowell-Cabot-Lowell's eyes glowed as the eyes of any connoisseur will glow when an audience is at the proper pitch for admiration.

IV

To speak of the Bishop's admiration is to speak too mildly. He gazed at the venerable relic with an impassioned reticence. As a Britisher it would be improper for him to betray any feeling; as a bishop it would be still more improper to shew his enthusiasm over a garter. But his hostess felt it; she felt it as the heart always feels a cog-

nate ardor. She was sure that the Bishop longed to take the garter in his hand, but she did not dare to suggest it . . . and yet she was sure of it. His fingers moved restlessly over the ebony frame; into his rigid face came the flush of an unknown emotion.

The tact of the woman saved the day. She was evidently overhearing the Bishop's silence, and when his fingers strayed for a moment from the case she lifted the lid quietly. Thus invited he took the garter in his hand, and as it lay on his palm a subtle feeling stole through him, a feeling of warmth, an inexplicable glow, a tendency to dance, to sing and to speak his mind.

At the same moment Mary Devlin appeared in the doorway.

"You're wanted at the telephone, ma'am," she said.

It was difficult for Mrs. Lowell-Cabot-Lowell to tear herself away. Was it an ancestral memory or a prophetic assurance which possessed the Bishop, I do not know. But the glow of him at that moment was insuppressible. He was magnificently, superbly human. Into his fine frame a spirit came and his feeling of liberation communicated itself to his hostess. She felt the *mænad* rising above the millionaire. In another moment she would have wiped out all the training of Boston and gone down to history famous for having slapped a bishop on the back.

But it was at that moment Mary Devlin called her away. And when after a brief interval she returned, her spell had been broken. Her sister-in-law in the midst of a sonnet on the Kaiser had been taken with a fit of epilepsy—and would Mrs. Lowell-Cabot-Lowell come over?

She went—and her dream went with her. But the Bishop remained, outwardly impassive but inwardly glowing as if the garter were a woman all itself in the embrace of an Olympian. He was in a trance and like one asleep he walked from the ebony case to a deep chair and sat himself in it, his fingers now tightly clasped over the garter and his eyes fixed on the ceiling. He felt

young, very young, and it seemed to him there was some vague softness in life which he had never experienced. What could it be?

Mary Devlin peeped in through the door; her desire to wear the Queen of Sheba's garter was growing every moment. She had watched the Bishop in his trance a little perturbed, and when he sat in the chair she felt sure he was ill. Would she call the footman or seize this chance to wear the garter? Before she could decide the Bishop called her.

She had a natural distrust of an Anglican bishop, but this one was fifty-five and harmless looking, and she was only twenty and full of the devil.

The Bishop rose gracefully and offered her his chair.

"Sure, the old boy must be going crazy," she said to herself, but she took the chair with the easy adaptability of her race. In fact it became clear in a moment that their natural positions were reversed, for while she was quite cool and collected the Bishop was deplorably self-conscious. He felt the grip of some unknown thing, though grip is hardly the word, for it was ineffably gentle in its approach and subtle in the prevalence of its power. The fact is the Bishop wanted to make love, but he did not know how to begin. He looked on this Irish housemaid, very charming indeed; he hummed and hawed and looked again. Words would not come. He began to toy with the sacred garter restlessly. Each moment Mary Devlin was looking more beautiful and was saying to herself:

"If he's mad itself he must have been a fine man when he was young."

Perhaps the impact of that unspoken thought on his subconsciousness encouraged the Bishop, for at last he found his voice.

"I have travelled the road of adversity," he said, "and found myself at last in the garden of delight." ("Holy God," thought Mary, "he's talking poetry; it's the tongue of a Munsterman he has for all his English accent.")

"—and in the garden of delight there

are many flowers, but the flower of love is the fairest of them all. I have crossed the river of ambition and crushed the husks of success under my feet to come to it. I stand before it in humility. I kneel and touch the ground beside it with lips too poor to praise it worthily."

The pent-up spirit of the man was bursting its bonds, and if he fell into rhetoric that must be forgiven in a Bishop. Mary Devlin found that instead of laughter, the thought had come to her—

"It's great luck the woman had who listened to him and he in his young youth."

For she did not know that he was a bachelor, that it had been the clever accomplishment of his career, ensuring him the constant help of elderly ladies towards his preferment. He seemed again to catch her thought, for he said as he bended his knees:

"Never until now have I come near to the rose of love; never until now has its lovely odor overwhelmed me."

This was definite, this was obvious, and Mary Devlin drew her feet under the chair as the Bishop's lips touched the ground. But she was a child of the mountains, mountains rising sheer from the sea, and wonder was her birthright. Instead of crying aloud, her eyes softened a little and she said tenderly:

"Sure you don't mean to say it's without a wife and family a fine Protestant bishop like you is."

"I have never married; I have never loved."

"Och, don't take on so about it," she said. "Sure you're young yet and a fine figure of a man."

Indeed, there was something very childlike about the Bishop just then, everything in fact except his voice, which still retained the unnatural tone of the pulpit. Mary Devlin looked at him with compassion, and then—though how she dared it she did not know—she stroked the Bishop's hair.

A seraphic smile broke over his face, a smile far beyond, more comprehend-

ing, more human than any of his diocesans had ever known, nay, it was even playful; it was the very fellow of that in Mary Devlin's eyes.

"Here is my offering to the queen," he said. "The gage of my loyalty."

In his transport he had forgotten that the garter was not his to give. He held it out with the air of a courtier, and she, for all that she was a plebeian, took it with the air of a queen. She did not question his right to the property; she took it as she took life itself, laughing while her hands were filled.

For a few minutes she looked at it steadily, and the glow that had stolen through the Bishop began to steal through her. But youth fights hard for its own, and her ardor was not comparable to his. Yet gradually the spell of the thing overcame her, and she longed to fasten the garter on her leg. It would not be modest to do so there, she felt, and yet, and yet—

Again the vivified subconsciousness of the Bishop caught her desire.

"Let me, O queen," he implored, "attach this adornment of virtue, this vestige of a virginal priestess to the queen's most sacred, most sacred . . ."

He paused. Not even in his transport could he mention that limb. . . .

". . . most sacred person," he achieved.

Yet he was not shocked when Mary Devlin, with the freer and yet careful manners of the democracy, lifted her skirt to the knee and allowed the Queen of Sheba's famous garter to be affixed with the episcopal hands.

She was at last wearing the Queen of Sheba's garter!

And now, indeed, although the garter under a sheltering skirt became invisible, the transformation became complete. It was Mary Devlin who now lay back and dreamt while the Bishop watched her with splendid eyes. She dreamt of young kings and golden dawns and palaces of silver, and, as she dreamt, age fell from the Bishop's shoulders, and she saw him only in the glory of his youth.

V

TO SEE things in their youth is to see them in their truth, and it would be well if I could leave my story there. But I am compelled to record how Mrs. Lowell-Cabot-Lowell found the lovers. She had returned from her sister-in-law's house after that lady had abandoned her epilepsy and resumed her sonnet. She came upstairs quietly, for the footman told her that his lordship was still in the Thesaurus. As she herself said in telling the story afterwards:

"He was sitting in the chair with the hoyden on his knee, and when they saw me she jumped up and rushed for the other door. But she fell over a chair, and it was then I saw the garter. 'How dare you!' was all I could say before the Bishop came over. He was very dignified, but he was blushing like a schoolboy. 'I beg your pardon,' he said. 'It was I who gave it to her. Of course I had no right to do so.' And then he lifted her from the ground. 'Mary,' he said, 'will you please give it back to Mrs. Lowell-Cabot-Lowell?' And she took it off without an atom of modesty. Then he took her by the hand and said: 'Mrs. Lowell-Cabot-Lowell, I announce our engagement. Of course under the circumstances, it will be easier for you if I go to a hotel.' I never saw such a change in a man; they are to live in California."

This was really a very fair account of what had happened, considering that it was told to the Lowell-Cabot-Lowells. But I have heard that actually her western blood had asserted itself, that she had cried, and that finally, having accepted the inevitable, she had given her blessing to the happy pair.

I do know that the garter was restored to its place of honor, notwithstanding the protests of the epileptic sonneteer and her husband. They both, by the way, died soon after as a result of the shock the Bishop and the garter had given their sensibility. Mrs. Lowell-Cabot-Lowell thereupon felt a new sense of liberation, a desire for adventure, and on the top of this came a let-

ter from her nephew who was serving with the British forces in Cairo, which ran something as follows:

By the way, aunt, I must tell you I succeeded in finding that old ruffian who kept the antique shop behind Shepherd's and who sold you the Queen of Sheba's garter. He has sold out now, and his chief amusement is telling of the Americans he fooled. I regret to say, dear aunt, that you were one of them, and I hope you will not be shocked by the real story of the garter. It appears that the stone and the brass band were originally part of a ring which an Arab shiek had made for one of his concubines who was no better than she ought to be. She ran away with a magician and fearing to wear the ring—which she valued more than anything in the world—she had it made into a garter. Then she ran away from the magician, and in his wrath the latter cursed the garter—"Even he who has despised love and touches it will know love, and she whom it fits perfectly can neither resist nor be resisted." Only, he said, if three honest marriages were made through it would the spell be broken. The curio-dealer told me that one was made some years ago to his knowledge. He said that the concubine when old, homeless and penniless had sold him the garter for a song. Of course, this is just as much balderdash as the story he told you.

This was the substance of the letter.

Mrs. Lowell-Cabot-Lowell read it carefully, and looked at the mantelpiece whereon was a portrait of the professor of archaeology. His light for a while had been dimmed by that of the Bishop, but now she climbed wistfully upstairs to the Thesaurus. After all, she said to herself, in this cramped Boston atmosphere she had known little of love or life. Perhaps the curio-dealer's story was true. She trembled with nervousness, and when she saw the footman on the landing she sent him downstairs. Then she went over to the ebony case and lifted the lid tremblingly. She took out the garter, and clasped and unclasped it two or three times, her heart throbbing. Then she bent down and made the supreme test. . . . It is in sorrow for the fate of such a brave aspiration at the age of three-score years and ten, I record that the garter fell suddenly to her ankle.

LA DESTINÉE

By Florian-Parmentier

CECI advint, voici des siècles, au mystérieux Pays du Sycomore.

Un khédivé illustre, nommé Khanouhitt, n'ayant pas d'enfants, se désolait depuis longtemps à la pensée que sa race allait s'éteindre avec lui.

Un soir, trois voyageurs se présentèrent à la porte de son palais et, au nom du Dieu Ammon, réclamèrent l'hospitalité pour la nuit.

A peine s'étaient-ils alanguis entre les bras berceurs de Morphée, fils du Sommeil et de la Nuit, que la femme du khédivé éprouva les symptômes de la maternité. Et presque aussitôt, elle mit au monde un fils, auquel le père, tout heureux, donna le nom de Siamois.

En apprenant par les allées et venues du palais qu'un héritier était en au Prince Khanouhitt, les trois étrangers — qui n'étaient autres que les plus vénérables des "Hathors" ou génies de l'endroit — s'étaient levés sans retard. Mais l'un d'eux, ayant observé l'enfant avec attention, assura qu'il était condamné à mourir dans la fleur de la jeunesse. Pressé de questions par ses hôtes, il ajouta que l'inexorable destinée voulait qu'il périt par le chien, le crocodile et le serpent. . . .

Le père, fort alarmé par cette prédiction, ordonna que le jeune Siamois fût élevé loin des chiens, des crocodiles et des serpents, dans un temple antique qui s'éternisait dans la solitude, sur le sommet d'une montagne voisine.

Jusqu'à l'âge de seize ans, l'enfant grandit ainsi caché à tous les yeux, derrière d'épaisses murailles, parmi les silhouettes spectrales des prêtres de Sébouak.

Mais un jour que, du haut du Spéos,

il considérait mélancoliquement la campagne, sinuée par les capricieux méandres del' "Tôm," il aperçut un paysan qui passait sur la route avec son chien.

Ce dernier l'intrigua vivement, et il voulut savoir quel était cet animal qu'il voyait pour la première fois.

A partir de ce jour, Siamois fut tenaillé par le désir de posséder un compagnon semblable à celui du paysan. Ce caprice faisait le désespoir de ses parents; mais le jeune Prince y mit une telle insistance que l'on dut se réoudre à lui choisir un joli petit chien, bien doux, qu'on avait fait allaiter par une brebis.

"Bast! avait dit le père, il lui manquera encore le crocodile et le serpent pour donner prise à la prédiction stupide de ces prophètes de malheur!"

Bientôt, l'animal s'attacha tellement à son jeune maître qu'ils ne pouvaient plus se séparer l'un de l'autre un seul instant.

Lorsque Siamois eut atteint sa vingtième année, l'inquiétude des longues heures méditatives, la lente et troublante extase des solitudes firent place dans les horizons de son âme à des rumeurs inconnues, des frémissements fiévreux, d'inassouvissables besoins d'aventures.

Un beau soir, n'y tenant plus, il s'évada.

Or, comme il se promenait sur les bords du Nil, toujours accompagné de son chien, et qu'il roulait dans sa tête mille projets magnifiques, un horrible et gigantesque crocodile sortit tout à coup de l'Tôm. Et, s'adressant à lui, le monstre proféra cette épouvantable menace:

"Siamois, ta mort est proche, et c'est par moi qu'elle t'advient."

Puis il replongea dans les eaux bouillonnantes du Nil.

Le jeune Prince n'était pas encore revenu de sa stupeur que déjà un des Hathors qui avaient présidé à sa naissance s'avancait vers lui sous la figure d'un Magicien et lui offrait un glaive en lui disant :

"Prends, enfant, cette épée enchantée. Avec elle tu pourras combattre le dragon qui vient de jeter le trouble dans ton âme. Sache seulement que, pour avoir quelque chance de succès, il faut que tout d'abord tu réussisses à épouser la fille du Prince de Nahrina."

Siamois se rendit donc à la cour du roi de Syrie. Là, il apprit que la princesse était retenue par un charme dans l'aire inaccessible d'un aigle prodigieux et que sa main était destinée au jeune seigneur qui la délivrerait.

Bien des prétendants avaient déjà péri dans l'entreprise. Cependant le jeune Egyptien ne renonça point à la folle tentative de graver multitude de rochers à pic, de défier le vertige des précipices et d'affronter la fureur de l'aigle.

Mais, au moment où il allait commencer l'escalade, voici qu'un énorme serpent se dressa devant lui en poussant des sifflements aigus.

"Siamois, lui dit-il, ta mort est proche, et c'est par moi qu'elle t'advient."

Le monstre put à peine achever ces mots. D'un bond le chien fidèle l'avait terrassé, et en deux formidables coups de gueule, il l'étrangla. Cependant, dans les convulsions de l'agonie, le serpent avait réussi à mordre le courageux animal. Siamois n'y prit pas garde, et la paie se cicatrisa bientôt. Mais, dès ce moment-là, le chien devint morne et inquiet, et son maître ne le vit plus courir devant lui en gambadant, ni venir à sa rencontre avec des jappements et des sauts joyeux, comme autrefois.

Le jeune prince continua néanmoins l'escalade, gravissant les pentes les plus

abruptes, franchissant les crevasses béantes, traversant les fondrières, se cramponnant aux anfractuosités du rocher.

Enfin, après des efforts inouïs, il réussit à délivrer la princesse, et il la ramena dans les bras de son père.

Or, lorsque le Prince de Nahrina apprit que le héros était un étranger, il refusa de lui accorder la main de sa fille. Sur les instantes prières de celle-ci, il finit cependant par promettre qu'il reviendrait sur sa décision, si le prince Siamois le délivrait de certain monstre qui faisait la terreur du pays.

Le jeune homme accepta cette nouvelle épreuve et, s'étant armé de l'épée du magicien, il partit avec son chien à la rencontre du dragon.

Lorsqu'il fut en face de celui-ci, Siamois reconnut le hideux crocodile qui l'avait défié quelque temps auparavant en Egypte.

A cette vue, il hésita un instant. Ne devait-il pas, en effet, pour vaincre le monstre, avoir auparavant obtenu la main de la princesse? Il eut envie de retourner en arrière et d'aller avertir le Prince de Nahrina des conditions qui devaient lui donner la victoire. Mais le dragon ne lui en laissa pas le temps, et se précipitant sur lui, il l'obligea à engager aussitôt le combat. La lutte promettait d'être horrible pour Siamois, C'était en effet le choc du géant contre le nain, la petitesse infime s'heurtenant à l'énormité.

Mais le jeune Egyptien avait attaqué le dragon avec une telle agilité, il lui portait de si formidables coups d'estoc, que l'animal dut avoir recours à la ruse. Et il enchanta l'imagination de son adversaire.

Alors, il sembla à Siamois qu'une nuit profonde l'enveloppait tout à coup. Le ciel se crevassait par brusques déchirures, des globes de feu roulaient sur les nuages, un vent impétueux hurlait de façon lugubre et menaçante, d'affreux serpents sifflaient de toutes parts, les forêts pliaient, les arbres poussaient de sourds gémissements, les fauves rugissaient dans leurs tanières. . . . C'était une vision épouvantable et

de nature à glacer d'épouvante les plus audacieux.

Malgré cela, Siamois allait être victorieux du monstre. Mais soudain, son chien, aveuglé par la rage, affolé par l'ardeur de la lutte, bondit sur lui et le mordit cruellement au poignet.

Le prince tomba lourdement à la renverse. En un instant son corps bleui

devint froid comme le marbre. La destinée s'était accomplie.

Dans son ardeur, le chien, croyant mordre le crocodile, avait, d'un coup de dent maladroit, porté le venin du serpent dans les veines de son maître, et ainsi, comme l'avait prédit le chef des Hathors, les trois animaux avaient contribué à la mort de Siamois.



FROM A BOOK OF DREAMS

By John Hanlon

"GOOD-BYE!" Love cried under my casement: but I only stirred lightly in my slumber.

"Good-bye," Love sang from the postern gate. This time I heard her; but I merely smiled. She was playing with me. It was still a long time before evening.

"Good-bye!" Love called from the gorse-cloaked heath. I rose and followed her languidly. Soon she would grow weary of her game and would rush once more to the shelter of my arms.

I deceived myself. She never returned. Far over the moor I could see her slender figure tripping lithely along. The wind bore her mocking musical farewell to my ears; but I could never catch up with her. I had failed to answer when first she summoned me. For me, henceforth, she was as intangible as an iridescent, unsubstantial soap-bubble.



STAR HAVEN

By McHarg Davenport

DORA, open wide your eyes
That the mother moon may know,
When her stars fall from the skies
Where it is they go!



SEVEN PAGES OF CONSTRUCTIVE DRAMATIC CRITICISM

By George Jean Nathan

THE fresh-as-a-daisy temper of the theatrical courtship of the cockney emotion continues to be reflected in plays like Mr. Austin Strong's "Bunny," the theme of which was already ancient when Dandin (or Bhasa) used it in the second century of the Christian era in the Sanskrit drama "Mrichhakatika" (*vide* von Schröder's "Indien's Literatur," Lecture 43), and in music show libretti like "Stop, Look, Listen," the vernal guffaw-woosers in which are the comedian who observes emphatically that he is through with women for good and all, who—while he is yet speaking—eyes a likely minx crossing the stage, thereupon says "excuse me," turns around and follows her into the wings; the rattling off by a character of an interminable string of Chinese, the query as to what the character said and the comedian's retort, "he said 'no'"; and the apothegm on poison ivy.

Add to the picture, in a dramatization of W. B. Maxwell's "The Devil's Garden," the scene of cross-examination in which a husband discovers that his wife has been monkeying with someone else—a scene bijoued with such passages as "Will, let go my shoulders; you hurt; I'll answer all your questions in the morning";—"No, I think I'll have the answers *now*";—"You're lyin', woman";—"I won't pretend any more";—"I did it for your sake, Will, as God sees me, I did it for your sake, only to help you! I couldn't get the help unless I sacrificed myself to save you"; and—"We'll begin at the beginning, and I'll have the truth, I'll have

it to the last word if I have to tear it out of your bosom." Add, further, some dialogue artificially draped together by Mr. Henry Arthur Jones for the purpose of permitting Mr. Otis Skinner to lean over the back of a chair with hat tilted jauntily across eye and walking-stick pointed with grandiose flourish at the villain. Add, still further, some more musical comedies in which ("Katinka") the star pantaloone makes a joke about listening to someone eat soup and, when two armed Ethiopians threaten him, observes that the future looks dark; and in which ("Very Good Eddie") the humour embraces such penoche as "Are you against matrimony?" "No, I'm up against it," and such jocosities as kissing goodbye to a five-dollar bill about to be loaned to a friend. And—the panoramic impression begins to be complete.

In the panorama there are, true enough, here and there visible fleeting instances of something or other soundly good, the which shall presently—and with infinite gusto—be narrated for our mutual delectation. Yet the circumstance obtrudes that the theater of the month has been anything but lively in imagination, anything but green in fancy. Do I seem again—ah, woe ever is me!—to be entering into several pages of what the yokelry condemns for destructive criticism? If so, let us appraise the annoyance.

What, after all, the philosophy of this hyperorthodox prejudice against what the contemporaneous whisker so calls destructive criticism? Destructive

criticism is the drill master of progress. Smashing a popular, and therefore probably imbecile, theory on the nose and advancement are twins. From Christopher Columbus, who cracked the popular theory that the earth was flat one in the eye, to Bernard Shaw, who handed the popular Sardou theory one in the breadbasket, the history of destructive criticism and the history of enlightenment are complementary. The attendant theory that fellows like Columbus and Shaw have not been destructive critics since they substituted by their own hand something better for that which they destroyed is sister fig-paste. If Columbus had promulgated the theory that the earth was round but had himself been unable to prove it—if the truth of his theory had been forced to wait for attestation until a hundred years after his death—Columbus would still have been a path clearer. The same with Shaw. The same, indeed, with any other exponent of so-called destructive criticism, whatever his especial field of enterprise,—from Theodore de Bèze who in "*De Haereticis a Civilis Magistratu Puniendis*" wrote destructive criticism of the quality of economic mercy and so, in a way, philosophically, logically and ethically made possible the tonic execution today of such gentlemen as Policeman Becker, to Johannes Schlaf and Arno Holz who, though themselves unable forcefully to invest the drama with the quality of consistent naturalism, yet by their destructive criticism of the existing theory cleared the way for such as Hauptmann. Who have been the destructive critics? Such men as John Goodsir who destroyed the flubdub enveloping cellular pathology and upon whose devastating arguments the modern anatomists have builded their wisdom. Such men as Andrew Gordon who laughed at the nursery notions of his colleagues in electrical science and who, laughed at by them in turn, has now been born anew and with magnified brilliance in the brain of Thomas Edison. Such men as Peri who, protesting in favor of poetry

against the despotism of music in the matrimony of the arts, reveals himself as ancestor of Richard Wagner. Such critics as the Honourable Jim Huneker who destroyed the cult of Bronson Howard and the Augustin Daly marionette market in terms of at the time unheard-of Continentals, and Frank Harris who submarined much of the Shakespeare locus-pocus.

On the other hand, of what species the constructive gentry, the great building forces who have been smiled upon and tea'd by pretty actor ladies, shaken of jolly hand by smooth managers, quoted fulsomely in the New Republics and the hotel parlours? William Winter, who interprets art in terms of morals, who for many years has written seriously that the true purpose of the drama is to portray merely the sweet episodes of life and that by this measure such dramatists as Hervieu, de Curel, Ibsen, Strindberg, Hauptmann and Brieux are artists inferior to Sydney Grundy, Louis Tiercelin, H. V. Esmond, Louis N. Parker, James A. Herne, Frances Hodgson Burnett and Madeleine Lucette Ryley. J. T. Grein who, reviewing, on January 5, 1902, a play called "*Frocks and Frills*," wrote: "Herein are we introduced to the amusing mysteries of a fashionable dress-making establishment and when there a beautiful woman like Miss Ellis Jeffreys removes her bodice and exhibits a camisole of delicate lace, a climax is provided which should be sufficient to draw the town"—and who, reviewing "*Mrs. Warren's Profession*" a few weeks later, wrote "It was an uncomfortable afternoon and I cannot withhold the opinion that the representation was entirely unnecessary and painful." Irenæus Prime-Stevenson who writes of the great genius of Meyerbeer. John Runciman who greases Purcell at the expense of Bach. Ashley Dukes who applies butternut oil by the wholesale to Maeterlinck; and P. P. Howe who smears Granville Barker, as dramatist, with melted opera caramels. The critics who hail the genius of Tagore and Alfred Noyes and Gene

Stratton-Porter. Heinrich Dorn who upheld the popular musical traditions against Wagner. Such comedians as Charlton Andrews who execute such sweetmeats as "the most typical exponent of such national drama as America thus far boasts is Mr. David Belasco" and talks of a play by Sudermann called "Die Heimat." Such professional yum-yum mongers as those of several of our leading news brochures who, like the gentlemen above, mistake indiscriminate praise for constructive criticism, confound flattery with critical fecundation.

As against such gunners of perfume and popcorn balls, such gooroos of glucose, I stand, please God, a sniper. That no theatrical person—whether manager, actor or playwright—ever pays the slightest attention to anything I say—save possibly to allude to me now and again as an old grouch—I not only appreciate, but also expect. So far as I know, nothing I have ever written by way of criticism—and I have been at the job now for more than twelve years—has ever disturbed in the least the prosperous mediocrity of our theater. Mr. Augustus Thomas is still the dean of American playwrights and, as the dean, still writes "scientific" dramas ("The Soul Machine") in which he seriously advances the doctrine that a person may be placed under the spell of hypnosis at long distance. Mr. David Belasco is still the foremost artistic conscience and wizard of realistic detail in the American theater and, as such wizard of realistic detail, still lights his stage ("The Boomerang") from above—it being a peculiarity of nature that the sun always enters a room through the ceiling instead of, as is commonly believed, through the windows. And advanced vaudeville audiences still laugh themselves half to death at the mention of the difficulty experienced in preventing peas from rolling off one's knife.

It is one of my deepest regrets that I was not born a constructive critic. I long for the grin of public approval. My hand is lonesome for the jovial

shake, my back for the commendatory pat. If, as Henri des Ménquens says, whom the gods would destroy they first make popular—then give me *fraternité* or give me death. But, alas, so intrinsic in me is the impulse to the contrary, the impulse to proclaim the flaw and withhold the squirt-gun of eau de cologne, that I myself am powerless against it. I have never written a single paper of dramatic criticism, a single short play, a single short story, a single musical composition, a single book or edited a single number of a magazine that has been able, upon careful scrutiny, to withstand my own searching and sinister eye. There is ever something about my labours that grossly displeases me; that—after a reperusal—seems a bit crude, even a bit ridiculous; that does not bear truthful raid by an intelligent destructive critic. The theory, so frequently quoted by disgruntled clowns, that "he who can, does; he who can't, criticizes," is, as I have once before observed, a theory appurtenant to the notion that Rudolph Friml is a greater man than W. J. Henderson.

Consider, in the light of destructive criticism, such a play—already alluded to—as Mr. Henry Arthur Jones' "Cock o' the Walk." The work has been denounced in some quarters on the ground that it was patently written to order to outfit the person of a star actor. Such criticism is, of course, thoroughly unjust: many excellent plays have been written in just such manner. Elizabeth commanded Shakespeare to write more than one to be acted by her favourite mummers at court festivals. And the poet himself now and again wrote voluntarily to the measure of the minstrels of his Globe Theater. Molière not only wrote "Le Malade Imaginaire" to fit himself but, so Schlegel tells us, went so far as to act and draw his last breath in representing the imaginary invalid. Shaw, by his own confession, wrote at least three of his plays with star actors in mind. Goldoni wrote for the company of Sacchi in Venice, and Hoyt wrote

"A Contented Woman" for his wife, Caroline Miskel. The list is long. It includes D'Annunzio, Rostand and Wedekind; Hubert Henry Davies, Haddon Chambers and Barrie; Schnitzler, Max Dauthendey (*voilà* Tilla Durieux!) and Sheldon's "Song of Songs." The critical hostility against Mr. Jones' play should be, not that it was written to order to fit Mr. Otis Skinner, but that, having been written to order to fit Mr. Otis Skinner, it should fit Mr. Otis Skinner let us say at least twice as well as if it had not been written to order to fit Mr. Otis Skinner—which, save in the most obvious externals, it does not. As it is, Mr. Jones' play gives its star performer not one-half the opportunities he enjoyed in "Your Humble Servant" (also a made-to-order job) and not one twentieth the opportunities he enjoyed in the dramatization called "The Honour of the Family" (also a made-to-order job.)

If, on the other hand, Mr. Jones desires that his play be considered uncommercially, be considered alone for its intrinsic, as opposed to its extrinsic, qualities, then destructive criticism must be visited upon Mr. Jones to the effect that he has, in this work, attempted an excursion into theatrical satire à la the Shaw of "Fanny's First Play," the Rittner of "The Man in the Prompter's Box," the Bahr of "The Yellow Nightingale" the Ettlinger of "Hydra," the Barrie of "Alice-Sit-By-The-Fire," et al., to which exalted form of humour Mr. Jones would seem to be unsuited. Mr. Jones proudly exposes such dialogue as "If you wish to keep these silly matinée girls out of your theater, my dear Conyers, just try giving them a good play" and (in retort to a deaf bishop's complaint that he cannot hear the actors) "You are to be congratulated," and imagines it to be fresh, bouncing satire when, in point of fact, it was old stuff when Sheridan wrote "The Critic"—to say nothing of when it was used in varied form by Mr. Philip Bartholomae in the prologue to "Kiss Me Quick" and in

the prologue of the Winter Garden show in which was the tune "Sumurun"—I forget the name of the thing. No man who could write a "Mrs. Dane's Defence" is likely to write satire. The scene between the vain actor-manager and his foolish girl admirer in the second act of Mr. Jones' play (a scene in which the actor for whom the play was written takes no part) is the one really good spot in the manuscript. It has about it an excellently sly and knavish air that recalls some of the grace of "Rebellious Susan." But otherwise, the manuscript is small potatoes.

"Bunny," the late Austin Strong play mentioned in my isagogic remarks, was one of those become irritating contraptions: "a play with a Dickens' air." It was of the familiar lifeless, quasi-literary, nineteenth century confection of secondhand-bookshop, quiet-lane-in-small-town-near-London, June-morning, male-Bianca-for-hero—wherein human nature is seen as in a reading glass. Mr. Strong's manner of writing is polished and his imagery (as, for example, his address to a young lady that she "is like a bright flag flying in the breeze") is of course immeasurably superior to the usual Broadway imagery in a like situation—"your hair is like spun gold"; "your eyes are like stars in two midnight pools"; et cetera—yet his characters seem but so many actors dressed up like Fiske O'Hara and in imminent danger of their sideburns coming off.

Turning to the late dramatization by Miss Edith Ellis of W. B. Maxwell's novel "The Devil's Garden," the vacuity of what is locally regarded as constructive criticism may be nicely appreciated. Let us, accordingly and by way of illustration, criticize the play thus "constructively." In the first place, allowing for the fact that the Maxwell tome was a loudly overestimated mumbo-jumbo, the dramatization, again allowing that the novel possessed meat for the stage, failed of prosperity for various clearly definable reasons, the chief of which is that the dramatist

allowed the most interesting elements of the novel's action to transpire in the intermissions. In the second place, the dramatist eliminated the satyric Barradine, the most piquing protagonist of the earlier evening, in her very first act. In the third place (as I, in a misguided moment, have already pointed out elsewhere), she showed clearly in this same act that Mavis Dale was so deeply in amorous thrall to her husband, so eager again to regain his love, that even were Dale immediately the curtain lifts upon Act II to confess the murder to her, he would be at once freely forgiven and set at peace. Thus, as early as nine o'clock, was the audience robbed of any sense of future conflict. In the fourth place, the character of Nora, the young gypsy, and the personage of the play next in interest to Barradine in the eyes of the audience, was not disclosed in person until the third act and then with so small a measure of preparation that the compelling scene wherein the girl throws herself, screaming for physical love, upon the throat of Dale, went for dramatically nothing. In the fifth place, the events growing out of this scene, events in which the spectators had been made to become keenly interested, were not only not visualized, but almost entirely set aside by the dramatist as being of no value to the play's thematic evolution. In the sixth place, the dramatist's comedy relief was a thing at once miss-fire and distinct from her story. In the seventh place, the lapse of ten years between Acts II and III divided the manuscript into two separate plays but weakly bridged together. In the eighth place, the minor characters such as Barradine and Nora were revealed by the dramatist as mediums of much more forceful and vital drama than the selected protagonists, husband Dale and wife. In the ninth place, the dramatist, choosing Dale as her main protagonist, elected to play upon the man's struggle with his conscience when, Maxwell or no Maxwell, the man's struggle with his flesh disclosed itself, even in flashes of her own

stage manuscript, to be thrice as dramatic. In the tenth place . . .

But why continue? Such widely practised and endorsed "constructive" criticism is so easy and, while so superficially plausible, reasonable and sound, yet at bottom so empty. For every such apparently tangible argument against elements in this particular play and for every such seemingly sound argument accounting its failure and so working constructively in behalf of future dramatic manuscripts of a like species, I can summon up contradictory arguments (also seemingly sound), together with concrete illustrations, which will not merely belie my initial arguments but which will probably prove the truth of the reverse of them to the entire satisfaction of everyone concerned. For example, I have pointed out Miss Ellis' generally granted mistake in having obliterated her most interesting early-evening figure in her very first act. Such an argument is pure critical flub-dub. Ibsen did the same thing—and critic nor public has ever found fault with him for it—in "Little Eyolf." For example, I have noted, as have many of my colleagues, that the dramatizer sprang the Nora-Dale scene upon her audience suddenly and without preparation and so caused it to miss its proper effect. Nonsense pure and simple. What of the unprepared-for scene between the thug and the Salvation Army girl in the second act of Shaw's "Major Barbara," incidentally the most effective dramatic scene in the whole play? For example, as against the criticism of heavily lugged-in comedy relief in itself largely distinct from the play, what of the heavily lugged-in, equally distinct, but yet highly amusing comedy relief of Mr. Broadhurst's successful "Bought and Paid For"? For example, in controversy of the criticism that, through the lapse of ten years in the middle of her play, Miss Ellis deleted her manuscript of the necessary vital consecutiveness, consider a similar lapse (doubled and more, indeed) in the matter of this consecutiveness in the prosperous Bennett-Knob-

lauch play "Milestones." Consider, similarly, such plays as "Madame X," "Merely Mary Ann," et cetera. So far as minor characters being figures more interesting (at least, while upon the stage) than the also present leading protagonists, cast an eye upon the waiter in "You Never Can Tell," the Mexican in "Arizona," the poet in "John Gabriel Borkman," the girl artist in "A Man's World," the Millie James character (you recall it, though I forget the name) in "Lover's Lane," the Bill Walker of "Major Barbara," the burglar in "A Gentleman of Leisure," Nutty Beamer in "Young America," a half dozen characters in Shakespeare . . .

As to the charge that the dramatizer reserved the most interesting elements of the novel for the intermissions, ponder upon the circumstance that the dramatizer of "Ben Hur" did the same thing—and made a fortune. As to the perfectly apparent passion of mate for mate and the equally apparent readiness eventually to embrace the offender, no matter what he has done or does (with the attendant diminution of the booby spectator's sense of physical conflict and suspense as to the play's outcome)—turn to such box-office belles as "The House of Glass," "The Family Cupboard," et al. And so with the rest of the blooms of such constructive analytical criticism. Whether addressed to a question of art or to a question of popular success, criticism of this sort is not only valueless, but, by virtue of the circumstance that it seeks to impose upon drama a firm formula, a changeless set of rules and regulations, deleterious. The simple truth about such a play as "The Devil's Garden" is that it failed (whether the view critical be from the point (1) of sound merit or (2) financial popularity) because—despite an excellent production given it by the capable and esteemed Mr. Arthur Hopkins and despite a remarkably telling performance loaned it by a Miss Geraldine O'Brien—it was neither (1) mentally, nor (2) physically, stimulating.

Girl and tune tournaments. "Stop, Look, Listen" is an opulently garnished rigadon in the tasteful Dillingham manner which, save for the vaudeville quality of its libretto and a dysphuistic tragedian, one Mr. Pilcer, provides very agreeable entertainment. "Sybil," brought from overseas and containing Miss Julia Sanderson—hold! Enough! It is, obviously, a most excellent show. "Katinka," by Hauerbach et Friml: old jokes, old tunes, old story, old girls. "Very Good Eddie," a moderately diverting frolic fashioned from the farce "Over Night." A point in this connection. Why, when entertainments of this species are displayed, the ubiquitous and quite silly journalistic lament on the tendency of our present-day managers to indulge themselves in the habit of making over familiar farces into music shows? The habit is as old as the soubrettes. John Fletcher's farce comedy "The Chances" (its story already familiar from the source whence it was adapted, the "Señora Cornelia" of Cervantes) was produced in 1624, was reproduced in an altered shape by the Duke of Buckingham in 1682, was re-reproduced in another shape by Garrick in 1773, and was made over—and successfully—into a music show called "Don John, or the Two Violettas" in 1821. "The Pride of Race," by Michael Landmann from a story by Wallace Irwin and produced with Mr. Robert Hilliard in the leading role, belongs properly in the present category. It is not a musical comedy. But it ought to be.

And now—reserving the best for the last—to christen with a sensation of agreeable anticipation and a conviction of its fulfilment the entrance, on his own, into the ranks of American producing managers of the brains and taste of the Charles Frohman alumni association, John D. Williams. Although a Harvard graduate and although addicted to the kind of soft collars the tabs of which fasten onto the shirt with little white pearl buttons, the fellow has been my boon camarado these years gone. There has never, in

all the period of our close friendship, been a single subject upon which we have been able to agree—at least, none that I am able to recall as I write this—and yet so substantial is the man's humour, so clear his vision and so genuine his faculty for discriminating between the gilt in drama and literature and the gold (he is himself a writer of ability), that I cannot but enormously admire the fellow, even when I am perfectly sober.

Williams is the kind of theatrical manager we need. He is of Broadway no part—he has seen to it even that his offices are distant from the loud-tongued, cheap-minded *rue*. In place of a clergyman's outfit, a freakish notion for lighting up the stage and kindred pot-walloper enchantments, he brings with him to the theater a broad, robust education and an Irish wit melowered by Milwaukeebräu. He knows good literature and good painting, beautiful music and beautiful women. An endurer with me of first night performances without end, he has never permitted any spurious affectations of tact (which have been expected of him in view of his personal theatrical associations) to interfere with a frank and honest appraisal on his part of the productions either of his own chief executive, Charles Frohman, or of any other producer in the business.

It is the nature of the fellow to detest shams, of whatever sort. He is no indiscriminate grinning greeter of theatrical reviewers whose empty pretences and puff-ball capabilities he cannot but snicker at—however much good they may, by such soft-soap stratagems, be brought otherwise to do him. He has assisted in the presentation of some

pretty awful specimens of drama, but he has been thoroughly aware that they were pretty awful specimens of drama and has not been the least backward in imparting the information (in advance!) even to those of his friends whose profession would shortly thereafter compel them to pass critical judgment for the paying mob upon the plays in question. There is, in Williams, nothing of the tilted-cigar nor yet of the art-for-publicity's-sake school of manager. And while undoubtedly there are, in his career, coming times as in the past when we shall not be in agreement as to the merits of the manuscripts he presents or the manner actorial in which he presents them, I take this opportunity to recommend to my flock whatever he henceforth does—good, bad or indifferent—as being at least the endeavour of one who is neither posture billy nor yap siren, but, to the contrary, a fellow who, even if in financially embarrassed moments he descends to giving the public what it wants, will not coincidentally descend to giving out the impression that he is, in so doing, presenting a really good play. J. D. W., I salute thee and speak thee *bon voyage!*

"Erstwhile Susan," the initial effort on the Williams' part, is a dramatization by Marian De Forest of Helen R. Martin's study of the Pennsylvania Dutch, "Barnabetta," with Mrs. Fiske in the centre of the stage. The play is slight but, by virtue of its quizzical types, amusing.

"The Cinderella Man," by Edward Childs Carpenter—flapper food.

"Just a Woman," by Eugene Walter—marshmelodrama.



THE GREAT AMERICAN ART

By H. L. Mencken

LET the bibliographical psychologists explain why it is that the first serious work upon bartending ever to reach the Library of Congress is the small volume by Dr. Alfred Jefferson entitled "THIRTY-FIVE YEARS OF PUBLIC LIFE" (*Huebsch*). One would think that a science so widely practised in Christendom and of such intimate and constant interest and value to so many men would have long ago brought forth a copious literature, but as a matter of fact the only books on bartending put into type before Dr. Jefferson's volume were absurd pamphlets of the "EVERY MAN HIS OWN BARTENDER" type. I myself, while still a high school student, compiled such a pamphlet, receiving for it the sum of \$12.50 from a Boston publisher. Most of them (and at one time they were greatly in evidence on the bookstalls) were put together by hacks employed at weekly wages. My youthful introduction to the business brought me into contact with several such literati, and I found them to be, in the main, gentlemen whose literary daring was only equalled by their lack of information. One of them, still a vivid memory, told me that he had written no less than twelve books in one week, ranging in character from a hymnal for the use of colored Methodists in Virginia to a text book of legerdemain for county fair gamblers and Chautauqua magicians.

Dr. Jefferson's volume has nothing in common with the confections of such eighth-rate virtuosi. The learned doctor (whose title, though espoused only by custom and courtesy, is nevertheless as well deserved as that of any surgeon, evangelist or college professor in the

land) is a man of long and profound experience, and of unquestionable professional dignity. He learned the principles of his invaluable art under the late Prof. Dr. Martin Dalrymple, for many years head bartender at the old Astor House. After serving for five years under this incomparable mentor, young Jefferson spent a *wanderjahr* or two in the West, and among other adventures saw service at the Palmer House in Chicago and at the old Planters' Hotel in St. Louis. At the latter hostelry, then in the heyday of its eminence, he became intimately acquainted with Col. Lucius W. Beauregard, of Jackson, Miss., perhaps the greatest authority upon corn whiskey and its allied carbohydrates that the world has ever seen. Col. Beauregard took a warm interest in the young man, and one finds the marks of his influence, after all these years, in the latter's book.

After his service in the Middle West, Dr. Jefferson became head bartender at the old Shoreham Hotel in Washington, from which he was translated, in the middle eighties, to the post of head bartender and chief of the wine cellar at the Rennert Hotel in Baltimore, that last surviving bulwark of the palmy days of American epicureanism and conviviality. The so-called wine cellar at the Rennert, of course, was chiefly stocked, not with the juices of the grape, but with the rarer and more potent essences that come from the still. Here, when Dr. Jefferson took charge, were ten barrels of rye whiskey that had been released from bond in 1844. Here was a whole vat of Kentucky corn that registered no less than 166 degrees above proof. The greatest of America's

connoisseurs visited the majestic vaults and dungeons of the old *gasthaus* as pilgrims might visit some holy shrine. Down in those aromatic depths Dr. Jefferson reigned a benevolent despot, and there he acquired his enormous knowledge of the history, etiology, chemical constitution, surface tension, specific gravity, flash point, muzzle velocity, trajectory and psychiatric effects of each and every member of the standard repertoire of alcoholic drinks.

In one of his most interesting chapters he discusses the place that alcohol occupies in pharmacology, and shows clearly that the common notion that it is a stimulant is ill-founded. As a matter of fact it is not a stimulant at all, but a depressant. The civilized man does not drink alcoholic beverages to speed himself up, but to let himself down. This explains the extremely agreeable sensation produced by a cocktail or two before dinner. One cocktail, if it be skillfully prepared, is sufficient to put a man into a mellow and comfortable frame of mind. It quiets his nerves by anesthetizing the delicate nerve ends; it dulls his reactions to external stimuli by shrinking and blocking up the cutaneous follicles; it makes him less sensitive to all distracting ideas and impressions, whether of a financial, domestic or theological character; and so, by the combination of all these processes, it puts him into that placid and caressing mood which should always accompany the ingestion of food.

I speak here, of course, of its general effects—that is, of its effects upon the nervous and vascular systems, and through them, upon the mind. Its local effect upon the esophagus and the stomach walls is probably stimulating, at least momentarily. For one thing, it increases the secretion of most of the constituent elements of the gastric juices, particularly hydrofluoric acid and citrate of manganese, and thus must necessarily make digestion more facile. But even here it operates as a depressant eventually, for it is obvious to any one familiar with elementary physiology

that a rise in the activity of the stomach is invariably accompanied by a compensatory fall in the buzzing and bubbling of the cerebrum and cerebellum. Our mental reactions are always a bit dull after a hearty meal; hence the feeling of peace which overtakes us at that time. The same feeling is produced by a few ounces of diluted alcohol.

Of even more interest than his discussion of such scientific aspects of his art is Dr. Jefferson's account of what may be called its social or spectacular evolution. He has an interesting chapter, for example, upon the garb affected by bartenders in various ages of the Christian era. At one time, it appears, it was the custom for the bartenders in the chief American hotels to wear full dress when on duty, like head waiters, professional dancers and Pinero actors. (This same uniform, by the way, was worn by surgeons in England before the days of asepsis. It was considered a gross insult for a surgeon to operate on a pay patient in other habiliments. The sleeves of the dress-coat were provided with buttons like those on shirt-sleeves, and the surgeon turned them back and fastened them with rubber bands before spitting on his hands and beginning his ministrations.) However, the claw-hammer disappeared from behind the bar during the Civil War and has not been seen since. Its departure was succeeded by an era of grave looseness in dress, and Dr. Jefferson says that there was a corresponding fall in the dignity of the bartender. In the shirt-sleeve days of the seventies, he was a nobody. It was a common custom, indeed, to address him indiscriminately as John, or even as Jack, much as one might address a waiter in a fourth-rate eating-house or a fellow convert at a revival. But once he got into his now familiar white coat, along about 1886, the gulf separating him from the public on one hand and from the caste of servants on the other began to widen rapidly, and in first-class bar-rooms he now occupies a position comparable to that of the druggist or the dentist, or even to that of the clergy-

man. He is no longer a mere pot-slinger, but a clean and self-respecting craftsman, whose pride in his subtle and indispensable art is signified by his professional accoutrements. This change in the public attitude toward him has naturally reacted upon the bartender himself. In the old days he took his swig from every jug and it was common for him to end his career in the gutter. But to-day he is a sober and a decent man and, unless fate has borne very harshly upon him, he has money in the bank against a rainy day, and dresses his wife and daughters as well as any other honest man.

Dr. Jefferson (whose æsthetic taste seems to be very advanced, for he quotes James Huneker's books and W. H. Wright's "Modern Painting," and is satirical at the expense of the impressionists) believes that the modern barroom is one of the most marked triumphs of American design. He says there are at least twenty barrooms in the United States that deserve to be ranked, in their separate way, with St. Thomas's Church in New York and the Boston Public Library. In his early days, he says, the present movement toward quiet refinement in barroom design was unheard of and the whole tendency of architects was toward an infantile gaudiness. The famous barroom of the Palmer House in Chicago—paved with silver dollars!—was its extremist manifestation. But for a half-dozen years past the architects have been putting away their old onyx pillars and rococo carvings and substituting plain hardwood and simple lines. The improvement is too obvious to need praise. The typical hotel barroom of to-day is not only a hospitable and a comfortable place, but also, and more especially, a noticeably beautiful place, and its effect upon those who visit it cannot fail to be inspiring. Even the ordinary saloon bar shows a certain forward movement. It is still, true enough, too flashily lighted, but its design is a good deal less delirious than it used to be. In particular, there is a benign passing away of its old intricate spirals

and curlycues, and of its old harsh combination of mottled marble and red mahogany, and of its old display of mirrors, so reminiscent of the Paris bordello. One still fails, perhaps, to be soothed by it, but at all events one is no longer so grossly assaulted and tortured by it as one used to be.

Dr. Jefferson is an implacable antagonist of the American mixed drink, and all his references to it are unmistakably hostile, but nevertheless he is interested in it sufficiently to inquire into its history. Here, however, his diligence shows but meager reward. For example, he finds it quite impossible to determine the origin of the cocktail, or even the origin of its name. Its first mention in polite literature is in Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Blithedale Romance," published in 1852. But it seems to have been a familiar American drink a good while further back, for there is a legend in Boston that John Adams was very fond of it, and that he once caused a scandal by trying it upon the then rector of the Old South Church, the reverend gentleman quickly succumbing and taking the count. But this legend, of course, is merely a legend. All that one may safely say of the drink itself is that it was known in the first half of the Nineteenth Century, and all that one may safely say of its name is that it seems to be American. Even here, however, the pedant may be disposed to file a caveat, for the word "cock" passed out of usage in this country at a very early date, "rooster" taking its place, and so the primeval inventor of the drink, supposing him to have been American, would have been inclined to call it a roostertail rather than a cocktail. The explanation may be that the thing was invented on American soil, but by an Englishman.

A similar mystery surrounds the origin of "highball," despite the fact that the word goes back not more than twenty-five years. Why high? And why ball? In England, where the thing itself originated and where it has been familiar for many years, it is called a whiskey - and - soda. "Julep" presents

equal difficulties. The etymologists say that it is an Americanized form of the Spanish word *julepe* (pro. hoo-lay-py), and derive the latter from the Persian *gul*, rose, and *ab*, water. But this derivation, as Dr. Jefferson justly points out, seems to be chiefly fanciful, and perhaps may be ascribed to some fan-toddish journalist or college professor, either drunk or sober. It is highly improbable that the mint julep was known to the Spanish explorers of America, for they were not spirits drinkers but wine drinkers. Moreover, there is no mention of it in history until years after the last Spaniard had departed from these shores. Still more, it was first heard of, not in the Spanish parts of the country, but in the wholly English parts.

This scant and casual notice of Dr. Jefferson's book scarcely does justice to one of the most interesting of recent volumes. The common notion that a bartender is an ignorant man is here set at rest forever. The author reveals himself not only as a gentleman of sound information but also as one of cultured habits of reflection. His book is written in excellent English from cover to cover, and the arrangement of its materials certifies to his possession of a trained and orderly mind. It is sincerely to be hoped that he will not allow it to be his last essay in the philosophy of his ancient (and perhaps now dying) art. Bartending has suffered greatly from the ignorant and cynical attitude of mind of the general public. When the average man thinks of bar-rooms, his mind quickly turns to memories of some of his own worst stupidities and follies, and so he comes unconsciously to the notion that the man on the other side of the bar is an ass also. Nothing can be more grotesquely unjust and untrue. The typical American bartender in this year of grace 1916 is a man of education, intelligence and refinement. He must be able to meet all classes and conditions of men in a dignified and self-respecting manner; he must understand human vanity; he must keep himself steadfast in the midst

of manifold temptations. Obviously, such a man can be no slouch. The boob, the osseocaput, the fat- or bonehead may get along very well in the pulpit, in business or at the bar, but it is quite impossible for him to survive *behind* the bar.

II

Various and numerous Old Subscribers write in to denounce me for 183 words of criticism printed in this place last month—criticism directed destructively at a little book called "SPEAKING OF OPERATIONS—" by Irvin S. Cobb (*Doran*). A good many of these protests, though mailed from cities as widely apart as New Orleans and Milwaukee, are in the handwriting of Robert H. Davis, more or less clumsily disguised, but the majority, I dare say, are quite genuine expressions of public fever and discontent. In general, they are divided into two sections, the first consisting of praise of Dr. Cobb, and the second consisting of abuse of me. I am not unaccustomed to such epistles, and, as a rule, they produce no more effect upon me than a discharge of gravel might have upon the hide of an aurochs, but in this case they came in so copiously and were so hot when they arrived that I confess to having been considerably shaken by them. As a matter of fact, I was so much shaken that I was eventually driven to a careful re-reading of Dr. Cobb's tome. This re-reading I have since repeated three times. The net effect of the process, I am glad to say, is that I am not only convinced that my former remarks in disparagement were well grounded, but also that they were exceedingly inadequate.

But don't take my word for it. Instead, let us go through the book page by page, noting simply and accurately what our revolving eyes behold. What do we observe on page 1? On page 1, in the very first paragraph, there is the old joke about the steepness of doctor's bills; in the second paragraph, there is the somewhat newer but still fully adult joke about the extreme willingness of

persons who have been butchered by surgeons to talk about it afterward. These two jokes are all that I can find on page 1. For the rest, it consists almost entirely of a reference to MM. Bryan and Roosevelt—a reference well known by all newspaper paragraphists and vaudeville monologists to be as provocative of laughter as a mention of bunions, mothers-in-law or Pottstown, Pa. On page 2 Bryan and Roosevelt are succeeded by certain heavy stuff in the Bill Nye manner upon the condition of obstetrics, pediatrics and the allied sciences among whales. Page 3 starts off with the old wheeze to the effect that people talk too much about the weather. It progresses—or resolves, as the musicians say—into the wheeze to the effect that people like to dispute over what is the best thing to eat for breakfast. On page 4 we come to what musicians would call the formal statement of the main theme—that is, of the how-I-like-to-talk - of - my - operation motif. We have thus covered four pages.

Page 5 starts out with an enharmonic change: to wit, from the idea that expatients like to talk of their operations to the idea that patients in being like to swap symptoms. Following this there is a repetition of the gold theme—that is, of the theme of the doctor's bill. On page 6 there are two chuckles. One springs out of a reference to "light housekeeping," a phrase which invariably strikes an American numskull as salaciously whimsical. The other is grounded upon the well-known desire of baseball fans to cut the umpire's throat. On page 6 there enters for the first time what may be well called the second theme of the book. This is the whiskers motif. The whole of this page, with the exception of a sentence embodying the old wheeze about the happy times before germs were invented, is given over to variations of the whiskers joke. Page 8 continues this development section. Whiskers of various fantastic varieties are mentioned—trellis whiskers, bosky whiskers, ambush whiskers, loose, luxuriant whiskers, landscaped whispers, whiskers that are

winter quarters for germs. Let us here be just to Dr. Cobb. He has done some excellent work with the whiskers joke. But all the same, I cannot say with honesty that he has done better than other artists who have tackled it. An old contributor to *THE SMART SET*, Dr. William P. Ratcliffe, once filled two pages with far more amazing names for whiskers than any here set down—for example, chin lash and neck muff. But in this matter, perhaps, I am hypercritical, for, after all, Dr. Cobb's book is not about whiskers, but about his operation.

Returning to page 8, we find that it closes with a reference to the old joke about the cruel thumpings that medical gentlemen perform upon their patients' clavicles. On page 9 there is a third statement of the gold motif—"He then took my temperature and \$15." Following it comes the dentist's office motif—that is, the motif of reluctance, of oozing courage, of flight. At the bottom of page 9 the gold motif is repeated in the key of E minor. Pages 10 and 11 are devoted to simple description, with very little effort at humour. On page 12 there is a second statement, for the full brass choir, of the dentist's office motif. On page 13 there are more echoes from Bill Nye, the subject this time being a man "who got his spfén back from the doctor's and now keeps it in a bottle of alcohol." On page 14 one finds the innocent bystander joke; on page 15 the joke about the terrifying effects of reading a patent medicine almanac. Also, at the bottom of the page, there is a third statement of the dentist's office joke. On page 16 it gives way to a restatement of the whiskers theme, in augmentation, which in turn yields to the third or fifth restatement of the gold theme.

Let us now jump a few pages. On page 19 we come to the old joke about the talkative barber; on page 22 to the joke about the book agent; on the same page to the joke about the fashionableness of appendicitis; on page 23 to the joke about the clumsy carver who projects the turkey's gizzard into the visit-

ing pastor's eye; on page 28 to a re-statement of the barber joke; on page 31 to another statement—is it the fifth or sixth?—of the dentist's office joke; on page 37 to the katzenjammer joke; on page 39 to the old joke about doctors burying their mistakes . . . And so on. And so on and so on. And so on and so on. On pages 48 and 49 there is a perfect riot of old jokes, including the *n*th variation of the whis-kers joke and a fearful and wonderful pun about Belgian hares and heirs. . . .

I proceed no further. My purpose is not to argue that the book is wholly bad, for, as a matter of fact, it contains here and there some excellent spoofing; but to show that it also contains a large quantity of the oldest and feeblest humor in the world—humor that was ancient and decrepit when Dr. Ayres compiled the first edition of his almanac. Such humor, I have no doubt, has its place in Christian intercourse, and I, for one, laugh at it without restraint when I am sufficiently in liquor. But it is surely open to attack when it appears in a book recommended by the publishers as "the funniest book written by Irvin S. Cobb" and "the funniest book we know of." This extravagant encomium appears upon the slip cover and is especially designed to catch the book-buyer's eye. Do the publishers seriously believe what they say? If so, what is to be thought of their capacity for judging books? If not, what is to be thought of their attitude toward the reading public? In any event, it seems very clear to me that Dr. Cobb has been doubly injured—first, by his own act in signing his name to such laboured and empty snicker-squeezing, and, secondly, by his publishers' act in dabbling it with such excessive overpraise.

I thus, at the end, specifically refuse to withdraw the remarks printed in this place last month. I am still convinced that they were just. Needless to say, of course, this somewhat elaborate re-statement of them is not the product of any animosity to Dr. Cobb. I have not, unfortunately, the honour of his acquaintance, but we have a great many

friends in common and the latter all offer eloquent and constant testimony in his favour. Beside these friends in common, we also have many interests, aspirations and vices in common. Both of us are too fat; both of us are anti-Carranzistas; both of us prefer malt liquor to the juices of the grape; both of us are old newspaper men; both of us are unlucky at all games of chance; both of us have written very bad books; each of us is the Original Joseph Conrad Man. Nevertheless, despite these points of contact and amity, I cling tenaciously to the doctrine that "Speaking of Operations—" is a fifth-rate piece of writing, and go before the jury maintaining firmly that I myself have never written anything worse.

Incidentally, several of the kind friends who have come to Dr. Cobb's defence seek to stab and slaughter me with the old charge that I am a mere reviler of better men, and hence accused. This allegation is one that every critic soon becomes painfully familiar with. It has been embodied in a thousand moral denunciations and epigrams, the burden of all of which is that a critic is a man who devotes himself to destroying that which he could not hope to create. As a matter of fact, this notion of critical destructiveness is anything but sound, for even the most bilious reviewer, whether of books, of plays, of music or of pictures, almost always praises many more works than he blames. Moreover, his praisings always get him into worse difficulties than his blamings, despite the common delusion that I have just mentioned. In my own case, for example, I have been far more vigorously attacked for arguing that Theodore Dreiser's "The Titan" is a great novel than I have ever been for arguing that this or that confection of the best-seller manufacturers was a bad one. Five or six years ago, when Joseph Conrad was still a mere name to the vast majority of American readers, I was denounced in a Boston newspaper for maintaining that he was a better novelist than Thomas Hardy and William Dean Howells. In exactly

the same way I got a lot of pedantic, sophomoric abuse when I first voiced the theory that Mark Twain's "Huckleberry Finn" was the greatest of American novels, despite the fact that various older critics, including Sir Walter Besant, had subscribed to it before me. Finally, I am being hammered in the newspapers to-day for arguing that my learned colleague, Dr. Nathan, is a sounder critic of the drama than the senile infants who so vastly enchant the old maids and unsuccessful dramatists of the Drama League.

A critic, indeed, is forced in sheer self defense into a carping and hostile attitude toward the majority of books, for even setting aside the fact that they are undoubtedly bad, there remains the more important fact that readers and connoisseurs of criticism delight in brutality and esteem a critic in proportion as he is lethal. Here we alight upon the universal human appetite for rough-house, for scandal, for the putting to death of the other fellow. Quite the easiest way to make a stir in the world is to engage in abuse in a wholesale and unconscionable manner. This and this alone is the secret of the popularity of such mountebanks as Dr. Bryan and Col. Roosevelt. It is equally the secret of the unpopularity of such suave, oleaginous fellows as Dr. Taft and Dr. Root. The first named gentleman, while President, committed the intolerable offense of refusing to give the mob a good show. True enough, the things that he and Dr. Root say are a million times more true and reasonable than the things said by Dr. Bryan and Col. Roosevelt. But the mere truth or reasonableness of an idea, of course, is nothing in its favour when one is addressing the mob. I speak here, not as a theorist, but out of a huge personal experience. I have been engaged in propagandist writing of one sort or another for seventeen years past, and have printed during that time enough argument, exposition and criticism to poison a whole herd of horned cattle. My writings have always failed of success when they were chiefly made up of

praise, however well deserved; they have always been successful when they dealt principally in abuse, however ill deserved.

Moreover, they have always had a disconcertingly inverse effect upon the public repute and standing of the persons with whom they have dealt. That is to say, those persons that I have praised have shown, in the main, a certain damage, whereas those that I have denounced have shown an unmistakable benefit. Dr. Cobb offers a ready case in point. I have more than once called attention to his tendency to fall into feeble rubber-stamp humour, and what is more, I have supported my criticism of him with an overwhelming and staggering array of evidence. Nevertheless, his popularity continues to increase steadily, particularly, it would seem, among the very persons whom I have addressed so eloquently in his disinterest. The first time I wrote against him I got no more than four or five letters of protest. But the last time, even counting out the obvious sophistications of the spies and gun-men of Capt. Bob-Davis, I got fully a hundred. Next time, I dare say, the very mails will be choked with them.

Such is the effect of criticism, however honest, however convincing, however sweet and mellow. The public views it as the ancient Romans viewed the art of the gladiator. Even though the gallery is always currently in favour of the fellow who is doing the wallowing, the emotion it eventually carries away is sympathy for the fellow who has been wallowed. The result is that the critic of the fine arts, if he is only belligerent enough, will always find it easy to drum up a crowd for his show, but by the same token he will always come to grief in the end, for just as, if he praises, he will be damned at once, so, if he blames, he will be damned after a little while. It is thus no wonder that the great majority of critics, whether of books, of music, of painting or of the drama, are hard drinkers, and that practically all of their classical fore-runners came to evil ends.



In the Shops of the Smart Set

By Renée



If you are interested in advance information, not only about fashions, but about the novel and useful things to be found in New York's best shops, you will read the following pages with pleasure and profit. We shall be glad to tell you where any of the articles mentioned in these pages can be found, or to purchase them for you. Address your inquiry to "In the Shops of the Smart Set," 331 Fourth Ave., New York City.

THERE seems to be no keeping pace with the seasons, as far as fashions are concerned. After the summer saw the schedule moved forward to include furs and velvet hats in August, it is not surprising that the spring models of this year refused to wait till the Palm Beach things had had a fair showing.

The millinery shops in particular arrange their seasons far ahead of the calendar. As early as the first of the year they brought out one or two of the silk models that bridge the distance between velvet and straw, and these had hardly time for a rapid increase before the straw hats themselves made their appearance.

NEW MILLINERY

Three of these from a large shop on Fifth Avenue are shown on this page. At the top is a little toque

of dark blue satin, with strips of satin straw running upwards to accentuate the height of it and to trim the ribbon bow on the crown. This cost \$6.95. Below this is another for the same price. It is made of dark green Georgette crêpe and hemp, and a long quill, which is fastened at the side and bent back to join the crown, forms a trimming ornamental

enough for afternoon wear, yet in keeping with the practical shape of the hat. A large rosette of satin ribbon is used to fasten the quill to the side of the crown.

At the bottom is a rather more elaborate hat. It is shaped somewhat on the order of the Musesetta model which the Ritz fashion show introduced, but it is modified in shape and changed in col-

ouring to be as becoming as the original was unbecoming. The brim is of dark



brown straw, and the crown and the wide puffed frill are of satin to match. Where the frill joins on to the crown there is a wide band of rose-coloured grosgrain ribbon, and the colour of this is matched in an ivory ornament which trims the front. The price is \$12.00.

STYLES IN SPRING SUITS

That the spring suits were shown so early this year may be accounted for partly by the same reasons as caused the advance appearance of the spring millinery, and partly by the increased number of models which are being designed in this country. Paris is still, of course, the fashion centre, but when the outbreak of the war temporarily halted the activities of the coutouriers over there, American designers developed a fund of creative power and ingenuity which has by no means been exhausted now that Paris has reassumed her responsibility for women's clothes. With the exhibition given by French designers in New York to serve as an indication of the trend of Spring fashions, a number of new models were able to make their appearance before we had time to hear what new style features were sanctioned by the openings in Paris.

Most of the large shops, however, waited until the buyers returned from Paris with their purchases before making their showing of spring costumes and dresses. Some of the most striking of the new models are of silk and taffetas, but as these will not go into general use before the weather becomes considerably warmer, the more severe models in serge, gabardine and light-weight broadcloth have first consideration. The suit shown on page 313 is of dark blue gabardine and is priced at fifty dollars. The coat is cut on fairly straight lines, the front being shaped to join on to a panel in the back, leaving a

V-shaped opening at the sides. The collar is of fine white piqué, backed with emerald green silk, and this colour is repeated in the silk which trims the two novel pockets in the front, and in the quaintly shaped buttons. Figured crêpe de Chine in red, blue, and green forms the lining of the coat. The skirt is extremely wide, with box plaits at the waist, and a seam in the spaces between plaits to simulate a yoke.

ANOTHER HAT

Worn with this suit is a tiny hat of dark blue satin. The brim, which is the novel feature of the hat, is lined with tagal straw.



It turns up in the back to hold a long wing, and in the front tapers to nothing. Two little bows of grosgrain ribbon form the only trimming other than the wing. The price is \$6.50.

SEPARATE BLOUSES

Separate blouses this spring are as varied in style as the suits themselves. The most noticeable introduction is the return of the low neck, but the latest models still include a number of waists with high collars. Transparent effects remain as popular as ever, as will be seen by the new blouse shown on page 314, where the sleeves and a wide panel down the front, cut in one with the collar, are of thin Georgette crêpe. The rest of the blouse is of radium silk, the same shade as the crêpe, an extremely pale pink. Pearl buttons trim the front panel, the collar, and the cuffs. This was a special offering in one of the best blouse shops and cost only five dollars.

IN A LINEN SHOP

Changing the children's dresses from the warm woolen fabrics of the winter to the light silks and linens of the spring is almost as much of an undertaking as choosing the grown-up wardrobe. A noted linen house on one of the cross streets specializes in clothes for very small children, and the little suits, coats and dresses are all of the

very finest materials, and made by hand. The suit for a boy about four or five years old shown on page 312 came from

this shop and cost \$8.50. It is of cinnamon brown linen, and features two deep pockets in the front, the tops of which are shaped to form straps that hold a belt of white linen. The neck and sleeves are finished with accordion plaited frills of white batiste, and white pearl buttons form the trimming. The masculine touch which, except for the shape of the pockets, is missing in the blouse, is supplied by a pair of very straight little trousers.

The girl's dress in the same illustration is for a rather older child, and is made to match the little boy's suit. The materials and the color are the same, and the trimming consists also of frilled white batiste and pearl buttons. In this little dress, however, the feature of two pockets in the front is secondary to that of an odd strap of self-material which hangs from the deep yoke in the back. The price was \$9.75.

ODDS AND ENDS

On a table of bamboo novelties in a specialty shop on Fifth Avenue, was the cake basket shown on page 314. It consists of a china plate, the bottom of which is covered with plaited bamboo. In the place of the usual stiff handle



is one formed of a rope of bamboo, for convenience in packing the basket away when not in use. The price was only one dollar.

On the same table was a striking ornament in the form of a Japanese dog of papier-maché. The dog itself

and white on the front, and the lining on the back is of cotton stamped in a floral design of green and white.

TWO TOILET PREPARATIONS

A finish for the neck and arms for evening wear which has been on the



was hollow and white, painted in Japanese style in a quaint design of red, blue, and gold. The price of it was the same as that of the basket.

At the same place was seen the screen, and considering the number of occasions on which something of this sort can be useful as well as ornamental, it was very inexpensive at five dollars. The frame is of wood stained red, and the screen itself is of cotton, painted in a palm tree design in green and black. There is a border in green

market some little time, but has just come to notice, is in cake form, and is applied by wetting a sponge and rubbing it first on to the cake of powder, and then on to the neck and arms. The paste formed can be thick or thin, according to the kind of finish required, and this has the merit of not rubbing off as easily as ordinary powder.

The same company manufactures a rouge, the basis of which is sherry wine, and this is said to be removable only by means of soap and water.

No matter where you live, you can always avail yourself of the best that the New York shops have to offer through the shopping service of THE SMART SET. If you live in the City, you can save time by making use of this department, which is designed for the convenience of our readers. We will purchase anything for sale in New York City upon receipt of its retail price, or if the cost is unknown to you, we will price it and hold it for you until the requisite amount is received. Every article described in this department is guaranteed to be as represented. This shopping service is at your disposal free of charge.